

HUBERT BONNER

# Social Psychology

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH







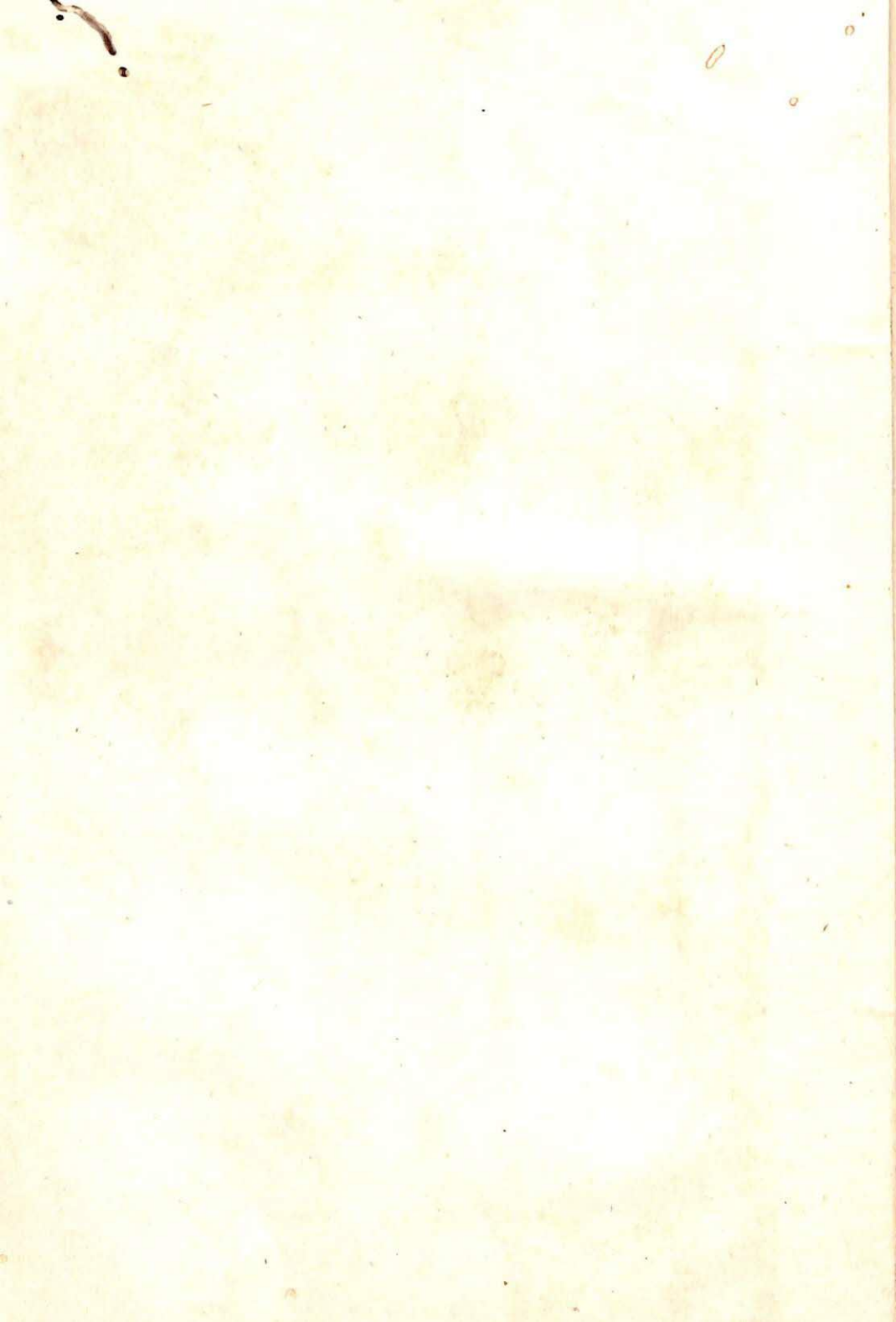
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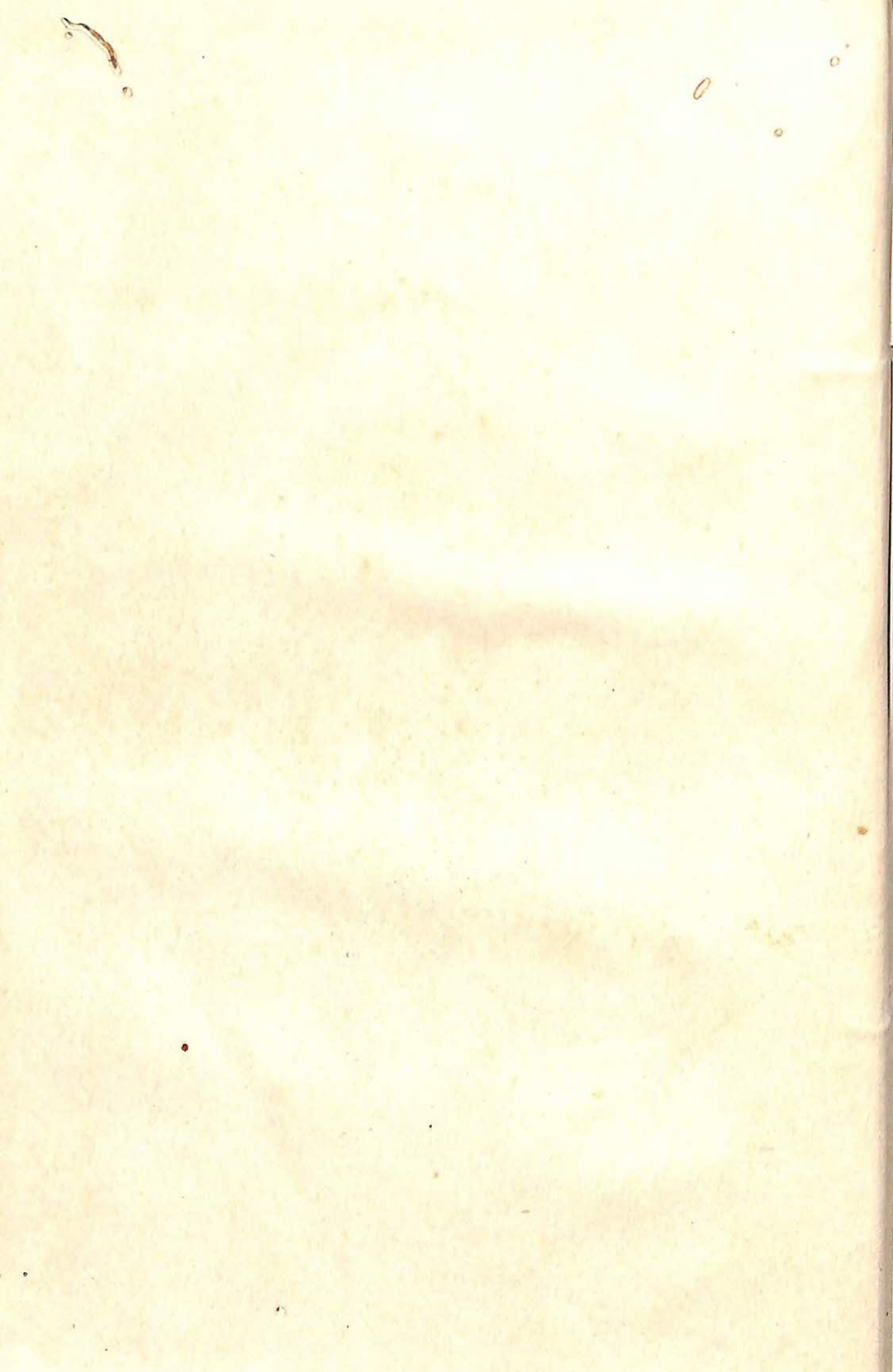






SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY





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1983

HUBERT BONNER ∴

*Ohio Wesleyan University*

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AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH



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## Preface

THIS BOOK WAS conceived in its general outline about twenty years ago. Like many students of human behavior before that time,

I was a strict behaviorist, nourished by the mechanistic psychology of John B. Watson. In the early 1930's my efforts to formulate, for pedagogic purposes, a systematic view of human behavior on Watsonian principles was profoundly challenged by three currents of scientific thought. The first consisted of the significant researches of Kurt Lewin and his associates, as published in *Psychologische Forschung*. The field-theoretical view of Lewin, especially as he developed it in his later works, has been a dominant influence in my own conception of human behavior. The writings of Charles H. Cooley on "human nature," and the scattered publications on the "self" by George Herbert Mead in the *Psychological Bulletin*, the *Journal of Philosophy*, and the *International Journal of Ethics* constituted a second influence, and helped me to formulate the social-interactional framework which I found fitted well into the "field" approach to which, with the aid of *Gestalt* psychology, I had now definitely committed myself. I came to feel that human behavior cannot be adequately understood apart from the social matrix into which the individual is born. At this point the third influence began to shape my psychological thinking. I had begun to study the early ethnological researches of Margaret Mead, particularly her studies of the process of socialization, published under the titles of *Growing Up in New Guinea*, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. I have been a "cultural" psychologist ever since.

My conception of social psychology has been a development of the core ideas implicit in the lines of thought which I have enumerated, namely, an integration of the contributions of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. As an interdisciplinary science, the chief problem of social psychology is the study of the behavior of the individual in the group. Since that behavior



is largely determined by the group in which the individual lives, the study of the group and its customs, norms, and institutions assumes a position of vital importance in social psychology. The view that social psychology is the study of behavior or personality *as such*, as if the latter were a structure in and of itself, or apart from the social and cultural factors which help to shape it, is from our field-theoretical view an untenable position. The integrated whole of biological, social, and cultural factors which manifests itself in the behavior of the individual is his personality.

With the foregoing view in mind I have tried to write a social psychology that not only concentrates on the behavior of the individual but on the significant role of the group and its culture in shaping his personality. I hope that the book will create in the reader an image of the person-in-his-group, rather than the person as a developing structure, unique and independent. Rather than detracting from man's dignity, this approach enhances it, for it places the individual squarely within the rich context of other human beings and their ways of doing things.

It is impossible to trace every important idea in this book to its proper source and to acknowledge every indebtedness to others. My students and colleagues have played an important part in making this work possible. The unfailing concern of my wife and children with the daily growth of the manuscript served as a constant stimulus. I am grateful to Mrs. Mary Alter for her excellent and meticulous care in typing the manuscript. I wish, finally, to express my appreciation to the Administration of Ohio Wesleyan University, which has given me financial assistance and relieved me of some of the time-consuming chores connected with my academic responsibilities while this book was being written.

*Hubert Bonner*  
*Ohio Wesleyan University*

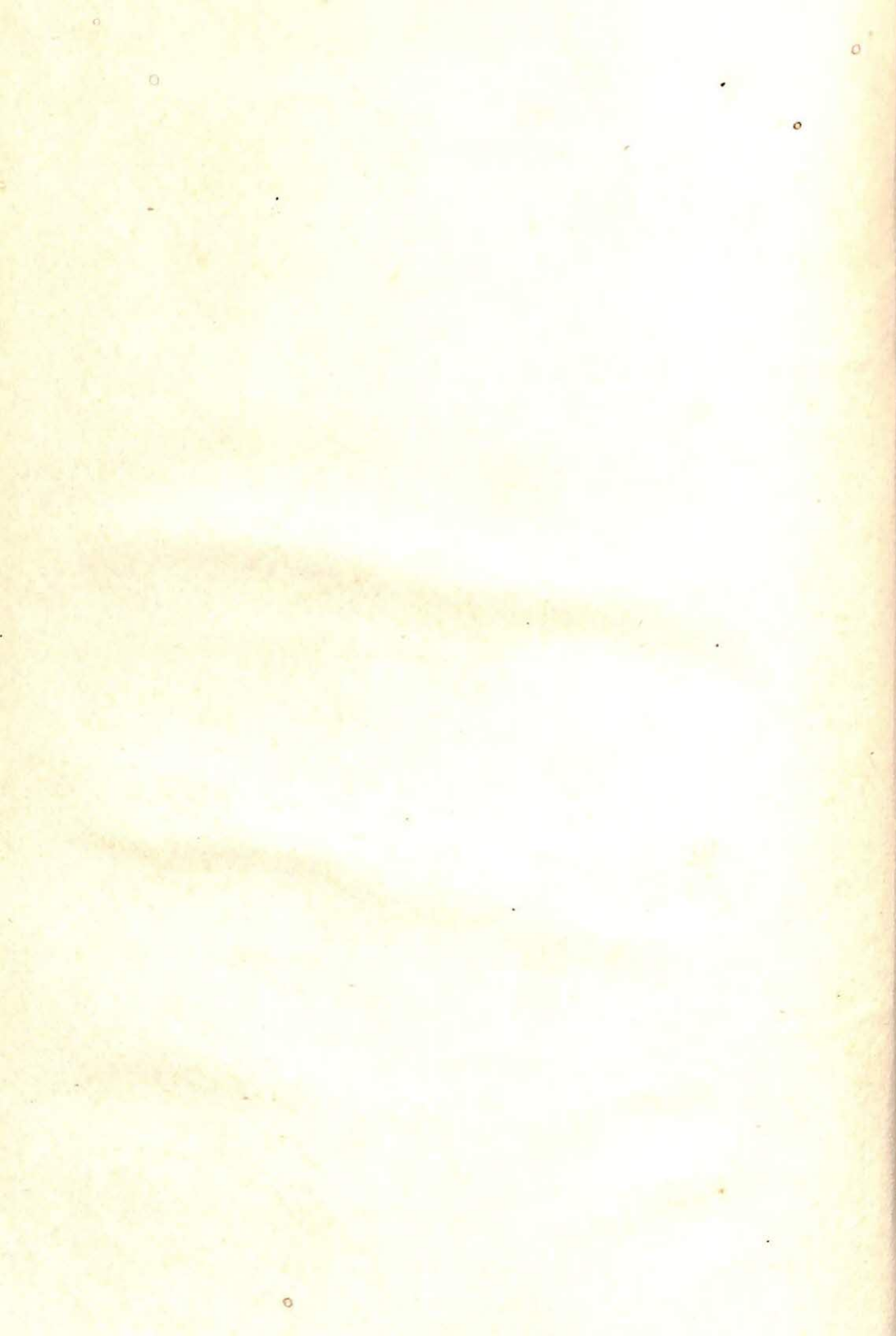


PART ONE:

# Introduction

THE FOUNDATIONS OF  
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY





## CHAPTER 1:

# The Scope and Development of Social Psychology

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY is the scientific study of the behavior of human beings. It is a behavioral rather than a natural science; yet, like the natural sciences, it employs empirical methods of inquiry. An erroneous distinction is often made between the behavioral and natural sciences, one that constitutes a strong barrier to the development of a science of social psychology. The behavioral sciences have been described as subjective and only the natural sciences conceived as objective, empirical. Of course behavioral sciences are not as "scientific" as natural sciences: the limited nature of the data of the behavioral sciences makes this impossible. It does not follow, however, that because behavioral sciences lack the precision and certainty of, say, physics, they are therefore subjective rather than objective.

The Empirical and Theoretical Nature of Science. All the sciences

are empirical and objective. From physics and chemistry to sociology and psychology the subject matter is the same, namely, a configuration of natural objects. These natural objects differ, as we go from physics to psychology, in complexity and in variability, but they are equally empirical and objective. There is a continuity of subject matter and of method running through all the fields of science.

In the consideration of the nature of science, another erroneous distinction is often made. This is the distinction commonly made between fact and theory, in that the first is praised and the second scorned. Yet the history and growth of science show that experimentation and the endless collection of facts without benefit of theory have not produced science. Neither, on the other hand, has theory without relevant facts led to the discovery of laws or the formulation of knowledge which we call science.

However, science has not waited upon all the facts before formulating its hypotheses. If it had, it would still be waiting, and there would be no science. Scientific research does not stop with bare facts. Empirical data constitute only a part, and not even the greater part, of science. Science passes beyond the facts, examines them critically, and relates them to one another.

The practice of going beyond the facts, or of not always waiting for them, is illustrated by Hull in his discussion of the relation between physiology and psychology:

It was once believed that the science of behavior must wait for its useful elaboration upon the development of the subsidiary science of neurophysiology—to knowledge of the detailed or molecular dynamic laws of neurophysiology. However, the gap between the minute anatomical and physiological account of the nervous system as at present known and what would be required for the construction of a reasonably adequate theory of molar behavior is impassable. The problem confronting the behavior theorist is substantially like that which would have been faced by Galileo and Newton had they seriously considered delaying their preliminary formulation of the molar mechanics of the physical world until the micromechanics of the atomic or subatomic world had been satisfactorily elaborated.

Students of the social sciences are presented with the dilemma of waiting until the physiochemical problems of neurophysiology have been adequately solved before beginning the elaboration of behavior theory, or of proceeding in a provisional manner with certain reasonably stable principles of the coarse, macroscopic or molar action of the nervous system whereby movements are evoked by stimuli, particularly as related to the history of the individual organism. . . . It is conceivable that the elaboration of a systematic science of behavior at a molar



level may aid in the development of an adequate neurophysiology and thus lead in the end to a truly molecular theory of behavior firmly based on physiology.<sup>1</sup>

The statement of Hull calls attention to the fact that behavioral science, like natural science, is described by two equally important developmental characteristics, namely, increasing generality and increasing specificity. It is misunderstanding of the nature of science which sets the two apart while at the same time praising one and scorning the other.

**Facts and Values.** An erroneous distinction has been made, too, between facts and values. Thus, the argument has long prevailed that science deals with facts whereas the human sciences—philosophy and psychology, for instance—deal with values. Is not, however, every value a fact, and are not most facts values to someone? Values are important *data* of social psychology, for values comprise some of the most important motivating factors in human life. They are directive agencies which in very significant ways mold and condition human behavior. As data, values are facts.

This is but another way of showing the inseparability of the empirical and the normative aspects of science. Feibleman in a recent volume puts the matter clearly and succinctly. He writes:

The empirical sciences are normative in the sense that they tell us what ought to be done. Physical objects do what they must, and not always what they ought, simply because they are caught helplessly between their own laws and the accidents of their environment. A stone would fall at the accelerated rate of 32 ft. per sec., were it not for the interference of the atmosphere. To state the rate of the fall *in vacuo* is ideal and, so to speak, states the event as it ought to be. But stones are powerless to alter the circumstances involving their fall, and so have no way of approximating closer to the normative, which, we happen to know, governs, none the less, all events answering to this description. . . .

Events involving human beings are described as normative, but this is not to say that they do not have their empirical aspect as well. The social level of human culture, human relations and tools, are facts, and nothing can alter their stubborn nature. The complexity of this order of facts and its susceptibility to rapidity of change are not considerations which in any way deny the factual nature. Human beings are subject to empirical laws just as are stones. But human beings are also

.....  
<sup>1</sup> C. L. Hull, *Principles of Behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1943), pp. 19–20. Reprinted by permission of the publishers. The term *molar* in the above quotation means “large,” “rough,” or “approximate”; the term *molecular* refers to detailed, accurate, and exact knowledge.



able to add a third factor to the two factors of law and of environmental accidents; they are able, at least partially, to control the immediate environment by means of the material tools of culture, and thus, unlike stones, they are able to approach the normative through the empirical. This does not prevent the human social level from becoming a science; it simply means that at such a level more can be done with science than can be done at other levels. The grandeur of outlook of a science is in direct proportion to the difficulties it presents to the efforts to render it a science.<sup>2</sup>

**Physics as a Model.** There is, thus, no fundamental difference between the behavioral and the natural sciences. What appear to be differences are not in fact differences in subject matter and method, but in emphasis, selection of problems, and relative amenability to measurement. If, therefore, we hold up physics as a model to keep before our eyes in this book, it is with the conviction that by following physics we are more likely to approximate the ideals of generality, objectivity, precision, and of natural science in the best sense.

The differences between the behavioral and the natural sciences are, in short, differences in degree. Even the factor of complexity, which we regard as a peculiarity of the human sciences, does not altogether distinguish them from the natural sciences. It is clear to every student of recent natural science development that the data of the natural sciences, again more particularly of physics, are no longer simple statistical events. The physicist is more and more obliged to deal with field concepts, and his "certainties" turn out more and more to be statistical regularities or probabilities.

## A Turning Point in the Study of Human Behavior

**Generalized and Unique Truths.** Despite much lip service to the belief that social psychology is a product of the confluence of three streams of empirical and theoretical data—namely, the data of psychology, sociology, and anthropology—for the most part, social psychologists have until recently proceeded as if they were dealing with the individual, and have not sufficiently concerned themselves with the socio-cultural world in which the individual's personality is formed. As a result the individual has come to be looked upon as "a unique creation of the forces of nature." The uniqueness of the individual has its place in social psychology, but it is only one factor in the total organization of the human personality. Furthermore, a science of personality cannot be founded on

.....  
<sup>2</sup> James Feibleman, *The Theory of Human Culture* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), p. 352. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



exceptions, on the unique. For the scientific study of behavior, emphasis must be given to individual similarities and to the factors that bring them about, to generalized truths rather than to unique truths. This is not to say that individual differences should be ignored. To do that is to disregard one element in the science of man. But for the scientific study of behavior emphasis must be given to generalized truths.

**The Interdisciplinary Approach.** It is becoming increasingly evident to students of social psychology that the problems of personality and human adjustment are neither wholly psychological nor entirely sociological, but both. In the last decade, thanks particularly to the important contributions of the symbolic interactionists<sup>3</sup> and an increasing number of cultural anthropologists, social psychology—indeed every psychology which purports to deal with *human* behavior—has undergone very important changes. The integration of our knowledge of the biological organism, society, and culture into an organismic, dynamic social psychology marks a turning point in the scientific study of human behavior. No social psychologists today can ignore the significance of sociological and anthropological data in the study of human personality; for the study of human behavior is the systematic formulation of the interrelations of the individual, society, and culture.

### The Beginnings of Social Psychology

Boring quotes Ebbinghaus as having said that “psychology has a long past, but only a short history.”<sup>4</sup> This is literally true; for, viewed upon the background of its antiquarian past, it goes back at least as far as the ancient Greek philosophers, but looked at on the basis of its scientific nature, it goes back only as far as the second half of the nineteenth century.

The study of the origins of science, especially in a discipline as diffuse and varied as social psychology, is crowded with pitfalls and barriers. Ideas are elusive at best, and they emerge here and there in a variety of forms in

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<sup>3</sup> The symbolic interactionists stress intercommunication by means of gestures and language. This term is used by Herbert Blumer to describe the social psychology of G. H. Mead. See Herbert Blumer, “Social Psychology,” in *Man and Society* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937), ed. by E. P. Schmidt, pp. 144–197.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1929), p. vii. Hermann Ebbinghaus was one of the early experimental psychologists who, besides contributing important new ideas to psychology, particularly in the fields of learning and memory, played an effective part in the emancipation of psychology from the hegemony of philosophy.



different minds. Ideas, like inventions, have a parallel development. It is generally unwise to trace them to a single source. They are invariably but a stir in the climate of opinion. As a consequence of the impact of prevailing modes of thought some of these ideas slowly crystallize into clearly definable propositions about a preferred segment of the universe. The set of propositions so arrived at we designate as a science. It is in some such manner that social psychology began. Its intellectual climate was Herbartian.<sup>5</sup>

**Folk Psychology.** By 1860, natural science in Germany had sufficiently freed itself from the metaphysical obscurantism of Hegel to be able to embark on more objective and positive investigations than heretofore. Philosophy of history, which had already turned toward ethnology in Hegel's time, now began in earnest to draw upon the rich data of the latter discipline. Herbart was in no important way a founder or even a forerunner of social psychology, but the intellectual climate in psychology at this time was Herbartian, i.e., empirical and positive.

**Lazarus and Steinthal.** In this stimulating atmosphere two German scholars collaborated in the founding of what has been for the history of social psychology an important organ of communication. In 1860 Moritz Lazarus (1824-1903) and Hermann Steinthal (1823-1899) launched the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*. This journal was devoted to the study of "folk" or "national" psychology, particularly as this psychology was reflected in the language, customs, and institutions of a people. These cultural features placed the emphasis squarely upon the search for universal laws of the human mind, in contrast to the psychological processes of the individual mind. These universal laws of the mind, so the argument ran, can be discovered only in the social activities of man—in his language, customs, laws, and the like. The concern with the social products of man naturally led to an increasing interest in philosophy and anthropology, particularly the latter.<sup>6</sup>

.....

<sup>5</sup> Herbartian psychology flourished in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. While this psychology had by no means renounced Hegelian metaphysics, it nevertheless emphasized the need for a positive or scientific psychology. It rejected the Aristotelian dogma that man is a creature of inborn and fixed psychological attributes and argued unequivocally, though unfortunately in a priori fashion, that man's mental life is largely a product of his particular experience and of the temper of the *Volksgeist*, or race concept. J. F. Herbart, *Lehrbuch Zur Psychologie* (Hamburg: 1887), ed. by G. Hartenstein.

<sup>6</sup> See John T. Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1907-1914), Vol. IV, pp. 212 ff.



*Bastian and Waitz.* While Lazarus and Steinthal were editing their *Zeitschrift* and writing articles on special problems in folk psychology, anthropologists were extending the horizon of their own science. Because of their relevance to the developing folk psychology, the ideas of Adolf Bastian particularly deserve mention. He added the psychological dimension to the hypothesis of multiple origin, the hypothesis, that is, that all peoples have the capacity of "elementary ideas," of originating the basic elements of civilization. There are no inherent differences between the mentality of primitive and civilized people.<sup>7</sup> At the same time—and later, in collaboration with Gerland—Waitz was working on his extensive and detailed study of primitive people which gave additional impetus to the study of the psychological aspects of group living.<sup>8</sup>

*Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1921).* Folk psychology as developed by the Herbartians and some nineteenth-century anthropologists never actually took root in American social psychological development. The Herbartians, despite their stress upon positive science, had not wholly freed themselves from the Hegelian conception of the Objective Spirit, i.e., a mind existing independently of the concrete, living individual. American psychologists have for the most part felt uneasy in the presence of what seemed to them meaningless, or at any rate functionally useless, metaphysical concoctions. One would, however, have expected a different reaction on their part to the folk-psychological work of Wilhelm Wundt. Wundt is credited with the founding of experimental psychology. When he came upon the intellectual scene folk psychology was already fully established. He therefore had little or nothing to do with its original development. He aimed, however, at something more important from the standpoint of psychology, an aim which deserved immediate recognition, namely,

.....

<sup>7</sup> Adolf Bastian, *Ethnische Elementargedanke in der Lehre vom Menschen* (Berlin: E. Felber, 1895). There is a curious inconsistency in Bastian's thinking. While he emphasized even more strongly than the English school of Tylor the hypothesis of multiple origin, nevertheless the elementary ideas which are common to all peoples he considered to be *inherent* psychic activities. Thus while he and Tylor anticipated the current emphasis upon the multiple origin of ideas, Bastian at the same time set up a barrier to the emergence of the contemporary hypothesis that likenesses in psychological characteristics in different people are products of similarities in their culture. E. B. Tylor's main ideas are found in his *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1871).

<sup>8</sup> Franz Theodor Waitz and Georg Gerland, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker* (Leipzig: 1859–1864), ed. by Gerland, Vols. V, VI.

For a good secondary source dealing briefly but perceptively with these developments, consult G. S. Brett, *History of Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1912–1921), Vol. III, pp. 284–287.



to bring folk psychology into line with experimental psychology. In this aim he went far beyond the folk-psychologists, who, as we saw, were satisfied to deal with the semimystical Objective Spirit of the Hegelians and Herbartians.

It is an interesting and important historical fact that Wundt was impelled to write, in the last decade of his life, ten volumes on folk psychology to account for the "higher mental processes," or human behavior.<sup>9</sup> The laboratory did not furnish him with experimental explanations of these processes; nor was his single volume on the subject sufficient to satisfy his extraordinary passion for detail and completeness.<sup>10</sup> Wundt was keenly aware of the fact that a psychology purporting to deal with what we now designate under the more inclusive title of human behavior—his "higher mental processes"—must take full cognizance of the sociocultural life of a people.

There is a second reason why Wundt turned to the study of folk psychology. Since his whole system of psychology is based upon the view that psychology is the science of mind, not of minds—concerned, that is, with the generalized, human mind—the individualistic approach of the laboratory, he found, could not yield the kind of data necessary for this purpose. For this reason alone Wundt must be considered an important individual in the development of social psychology.

Does this mean, then, that Wundt considered experimental psychology inadequate? Not at all; on the contrary, he approached the field of folk psychology by way of experimental psychology. The principles of experimental psychology were basic even to those fields which, like folk psychology, could only be studied from the standpoint of man's social products—language, customs, mythology, religion, art, law, etc. Individual—i.e., experimental—and folk psychology together make up an inclusive science of psychology. More specifically, experimental psychology must be supplemented by folk psychology, and the two together can give us a psychology that will truly encompass all important psychological phenomena.

Although a psychologist, Wundt had the perspicacity of a true ethnologist. He saw clearly the need for the study of social origins in simple or primitive society. It is in simple societies, he believed, that those social

<sup>9</sup> Wilhelm Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie: Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1911–1920).

<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm Wundt, *Elemente der Völkerpsychologie* (Leipzig: A. Kröner, 1912). This valuable work is translated into English by E. L. Schaub, *Elements of Folk Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), and the interested student will find its study highly rewarding.



products of language, myth, and custom can be most adequately studied by the psychologist.<sup>11</sup>

Wundt's whole psychology has been described by historians of psychology as "elementaristic."<sup>12</sup> He conceived psychology as being concerned with the analysis of conscious processes into elements which are bound together by the law of creative synthesis. When he came to folk psychology he was governed in his thinking by the same principles. He was looking for the elements of the folk mind and the means whereby these elements were synthesized to produce it. The elements of the folk mind he found in the social products of language, myth, and custom. He felt it his task, therefore, to study these products carefully and minutely.<sup>13</sup> He found the principle of synthesis in language, the social phenomenon in which the individual elements are synthesized, i.e., in which the individual and the social meet to form the whole field of human psychology.<sup>14</sup> Language, with Wundt, as with all social psychologists, was thus of greatest importance.<sup>15</sup>

In view of Wundt's important place in the history of psychology the curious student might well wonder why he has seemed to have had so little effect on the course of American social psychology. Actually, Wundt's effect on our social psychology has been considerable, but for the most part either indirect or unrecognized. Its indirect influence has been felt mainly through the lucid writings of Émile Durkheim and his followers, who were themselves significantly influenced by the German school of folk psychology, particularly by Wundt.<sup>16</sup> An influence which is indirect, even though recognized, fails to be traced to its source; and so most students of social psychology do not go back to Wundt to discover an important source of their discipline.

Furthermore, the failure of American social psychologists to recognize Wundt's work in folk psychology resulted in part from the fact that until recently psychologists have not generally been informed in the field of

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> Boring, *op. cit.*, chap. xv.

<sup>13</sup> This program is clearly stated in the subtitle of his ten volumes of the *Völkerpsychologie*, namely, *Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte* ("A Study of the Genetic Principles of Language, Myth and Custom").

<sup>14</sup> This raises the logical difficulty, from our point of view, of an element in a whole, viz., language, serving as the means of fusing the elements into a whole. Perhaps in additive wholes, such as Wundt had in mind in his creative synthesis, this is no problem at all.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that the subject of language constitutes Vols. I and II of Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie*.

<sup>16</sup> See Paul Radin, *Social Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1932), p. 11.



anthropology, particularly ethnology. With the development of social psychology into a fusion of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, social psychologists are beginning to recognize that Wundt's writings make up one of the richest sources of data for social psychology.

## Social Psychology Today

It is impossible to draw a dividing line between the developments which we have sketched in the foregoing section and social psychology today. Some of the older ideas are still very much with us. They suffuse and inspire some of the most recent discussions in social psychology. Most of the leading figures in the history of social psychology are dead. John Dewey, who died in 1952, did not specifically devote himself to the problems of social psychology during the last twenty years of his life. Generally speaking, contemporary social psychology is the result of the cross-fertilization of data from biology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology and is progressively being unified by organismic, or field theoretical, postulates.

**The Biological Substructure.** The relegation of biological data to an inconsequential position, as some extreme environmentalists seem to do, has no scientific justification. The data of biology must be reckoned with, even by those who, like the present writer, consider them generally of less significance than the social and cultural. All sound social psychology must begin with the individual organism as a given datum; and while this organism is generally more plastic than had been realized until recently, it presents a limiting factor in the growth of human personality of no trifling significance.

**The Adjustive Process.** Schools of psychology have come and gone, but the fundamental problem of psychology, its basic subject matter, remains the same. It is the study of the basic orientations of the individual in the group, the ways in which he achieves his goals or reduces his tensions, and the behavior of the group itself. In this process of adjustment learning is an indispensable factor, and learning has been, and is today, one of the most important problems of psychology. Social psychology must constantly appeal to psychological processes, must take into consideration the facts and principles of psychology.

Under psychology we include the contributions of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Psychology has been brought into an intimate and functional relationship with anthropology primarily by way of orthodox psychiatry and Freudian psychoanalysis. Social psychology's emphasis today on the total



personality is in no small way a continuation of psychiatry's concern with the whole man. Neo-Freudian psychoanalysis, as expounded by such "revisionists" as Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, and Erich Fromm, has been a source of immeasurable enrichment to the study of human behavior.<sup>17</sup>

Social psychology has not been notable for experimental research, and too much of the little that it has accomplished has been disappointingly trivial. Nevertheless, experimental psychology has made itself felt, and the wise social psychologist is turning his attention more and more to the problems of experimental social psychology.<sup>18</sup>

**Interactionism.** All social psychology today is interactionist. The emphasis is placed, not on reaction to stimuli, but on *interaction* between person and person, person and group, and between groups. Interactionism is largely a sociological contribution to social psychology. The concept of social interaction, defined as a process of interstimulation-and-response, is now the central idea in many systems of sociology. Probably the most consistent application of the concept of interaction to the study of human behavior is to be found in the work of G. H. Mead.

**The Cultural Superstructure.** The sketch of social psychology presented in this chapter demonstrates an important characteristic of scientific development, namely, that each new advance in human knowledge proceeds from a body of facts and ideas already implicit in its predecessors. We have briefly traced the rise of social psychology in the ethnological framework of nineteenth-century folk psychology and evolutionary anthropology. While neither of these is acceptable at the present time, the study and research which they initiated has at last taken clear form in cross-cultural studies of human behavior. If instinct psychology has finally met its deserved end, as we believe it has, this fact is in no small part due to the contributions of a long line of eminent contemporary social

<sup>17</sup> See the following: Harry S. Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Washington, D.C.: The William Alanson White Psychiatric Foundation, 1947); Karen Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1937); Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1939); Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941); Fromm, *Man for Himself* (New York: Rinehart, 1947).

<sup>18</sup> The experimental works of such researchers as Kurt Lewin and his followers, notably Dembo, Hoppe, Lissner, Mahler, and Lippitt, are of considerable importance. For a detailed discussion of experimental social psychology the student should consult Gardner Murphy, Lois B. Murphy, and Theodore M. Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1937).



anthropologists from Bronislaw Malinowski to Ralph Linton. We saw earlier in this chapter that the *Volksgeist*, or the race concept, dominated the field of nineteenth-century anthropological studies of the psychology of man. This point of view was based upon the postulate—or more correctly, the dogma—that acquired social traits were biologically transmitted. Today ethnological studies are utilized by the social psychologist, not only for the factual data and the light they throw upon the growing personality, but as a method of research as well. Cultural anthropology is at last being used, not to support a doctrine of racial superiority, but to trace the determination of behavior and attitudes in the basic customs and the dominant institutions of a particular culture.

In making these observations we may convey the impression that social psychology so conceived is now an established fact. This is manifestly not the case. What we are claiming here is that the point of view under consideration is an emerging one, and the details of its outline are not easily predictable. Psychology—genetic, social, child, abnormal—is giving increasing attention to the sociocultural matrix of human personality. The antipathy psychologists in general have felt toward extrapsychological data is giving way to a sympathetic view of the importance of cultural phenomena. Sociologists are now incorporating psychological data in their study of human behavior. In this way, psychology, sociology, and anthropology no longer go in their separate ways, but are cooperating to investigate the mainsprings of human behavior.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The literature dealing with or being an expression of various phases of this approach is growing rapidly. The following are recommended to the interested student: Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934); Clyde Kluckhohn and Henry A. Murray, eds., *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1948); Ralph Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936); Bronislaw Malinowski, "Man's Culture and Man's Behavior," *Sigma Xi Quart.*, 29 (1941), 182–196; 30 (1942), 66–78; Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: Morrow, 1928); Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (New York: Morrow, 1930); Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: Morrow, 1935).

For applications of anthropology to the study of personality, see Abram Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939); Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945); Ralph Linton, *The Cultural Background of Personality* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1945).



## Conclusion

Our brief survey of the development of social psychology is now completed. The reader will have noted the complexity of its subject matter and the varied currents of thought that have conditioned its growth. Social psychology, like every department of knowledge, is affected by the leading ideas of the time in which it flourishes. It is affected by the erroneous facts and false conclusions which every generation accepts as truths. These false ideas are not so much errors of judgment as they are deep-seated prejudices growing out of the predilections and intellectual preferences of a particular era. In the field of the behavioral sciences, which touch so intimately our deepest feelings and most revered traditions, the ideas of the time are even more likely to affect all inquiry.

It would be wrong, of course, to attribute the false starts and erroneous conclusions of social psychology wholly to the intellectual climate or to the prejudices of individual scientists. It takes time to reach well-defined hypotheses, and without hypotheses the mass of empirical data in our possession remains inchoate and confusing. Social psychology has just recently become concerned with an examination of its fundamental principles and the construction of logically consistent frames of reference.

As long, moreover, as the behavioral sciences did not recognize their interconnections, social psychology could not but place a one-sided emphasis upon a narrow segment of the total behavioral pattern. As pointed out above, psychologists until recently were seldom cognizant of the overlying sociocultural factors, nor sociologists and anthropologists of the basic psychobiological ones in the genesis and development of human behavior. This deficiency is now being remedied by the cross-fertilization of psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

Social psychology, as it is developed in this book, is that branch of the social sciences which studies behavior as it develops in the human group. In the past psychologists have not, as a rule, concerned themselves with the psychological and the cultural attributes of human groups. They have, rather, focused their attention upon the single individual in the laboratory, clinic, or mental hospital. Because of their devotion to the observation of the individual, and because most individuals whom they observed had very similar if not common cultural backgrounds, these psychologists became impressed by, and preoccupied with, individual "personality traits." Social psychology has not yet fully emancipated itself from "trait psychology." In this respect psychologists recapitulated in psychology the anthropologists' error in anthropology of overemphasizing "cultural traits," instead of, as now, studying the person in terms of integral concepts—in terms, that is, of group differences in personality organization.

We believe that this change, if not greater and more revolutionary, is certainly equal in its effects to the change which took place in psychology at the opening of the twentieth century, a change away from instinct psychology and "biologism" to behavioristic psychology and environmentalism.

## CHAPTER 2 :

# The Method and Framework of Social Psychology

MEN TAKE PRIDE in their use of common sense in the solution of their daily problems. They exalt it to the point where even science is conceived to be nothing more than "glorified common sense." We do not wish to deny that science is in some ways only a greater refinement of the observations of everyday life, the scientist using greater precision and more meticulous definitions of concepts. The history of scientific investigation and discovery, however, should have warned us that not infrequently common sense is an unsafe guide to scientific knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The theories of relativity or of psychoanalytic psychology are the fruits of a "sense" that is both extraordinary and uncommon; whereas Aristotle's views that stones

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent discussion of this problem see Philipp Frank, *Modern Science and Its Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949).



fall to the ground because of their inherent heaviness, or that human beings behave as they do because they are social animals, are deliverances of the common sense of his day. This mode of explanation may be good philosophy but it is bad science.

The worship of common sense has been notably pernicious in the behavioral sciences. Practically every politician, clergyman, and business leader fancies himself a keen judge of human personality. The extensive opportunity of these men to observe people in varying situations confronted by a variety of problems has increased their self-assurance. In a measure they are right in their attitudes. Experience in dealing with people has provided them with considerable skill in handling the practical problems of everyday affairs. Pragmatically, these skills are sufficient for their purpose. Scientifically speaking, however, their knowledge is rule of thumb and their observations do not lead to a more reliable understanding of the bases of the actions of men. Their common sense is at the bottom of many of the false beliefs of mankind.

In view of the foregoing observations we must take our stand with science rather than with common sense. While the procedures of science are sometimes open to question and have led us to false conclusions, we must look upon these errors merely as the inescapable consequences of the complexity of the world we live in. Scientific procedure is above all things self-corrective, and, unlike folklore and common sense, reacts to every refutation of its conclusions with a feeling of triumph in having discovered its own errors. Every admission of error is but a vindication of its spirit of objectivity, tentativeness, and cautious inquiry.

### The Scientific Point of View

Many fine things have been said, and justly, about science and its role in human civilization. It is not our intention in this chapter to add to the paeans of praise; rather, we wish to place before the student of social psychology a clear and simple analysis of the standpoint and method of our discipline.

**The Scientific Attitude.** The scientific attitude is not a simple state of mind that can be readily described. It has a number of facets. It consists, first of all, in a steadfast refusal to see the world as we should like it to be, and the determination to penetrate beneath surface appearances. This is not an easy task. But the recognition of this fact is in itself an important element in scientific thinking. The modern social psychologist, possessed of adequate sophistication, knows that we tend to view the



world through the ideas and values of our own culture, that we tend to explain human behavior in terms of group interests and current prejudices.<sup>2</sup> The social psychologist must prevent these prejudices from distorting the facts that will aid in our understanding of human behavior. He must be flexible and astutely critical within the limits of the cultural and intellectual forces which affect his own thinking and observation. It is this critical quality that distinguishes science from common sense.

In social psychology, as in all other branches of science that deal with man and his conduct, this attitude is particularly difficult to maintain. Man cannot easily view himself or his group in the clear light of critical analysis. He must appear to be superior to lower animals, surely, and, if possible, to those of his own species. In light of this fact the cultivation of the scientific attitude requires above all a high degree of intellectual honesty.

### Scientific Method in Social Psychology

In our discussion of the scientific point of view we have already suggested a few considerations regarding the nature of scientific method. It is an intellectual attitude in which criticism, systematization, and generalization play a very important part. Lest the student think, however, that science, including social psychology, is a pedantic worship of dry facts and remorseless logic, it should be pointed out that the scientific method at its best is also creative. Constructive imagination has characterized most of the great theories and discoveries of science. The free play of the mind among the multiplicity of unconnected facts has frequently led to marvelous conclusions. The solution of a problem is not infrequently reached before the proof has been supplied. While this situation may be deplored by the pedestrian worker in science, since it challenges his settled convictions regarding its factual-mindedness, it is often the source of the scientist's greatest inspiration.

**Theoretical Constructs.** We have tried to make clear that fact and theory are inseparable, that the empirical and theoretical approaches together constitute the essence of scientific methodology. The task of the psychologist is to formulate, on the basis of empirical data and logical postulates, the general laws of behavior. For this purpose many psychologists employ the method of logical construction, of introducing theoretical constructs which serve as guesses as to what impalpable forces or

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<sup>2</sup> See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936); V. F. Calverton, *The Making of Man* (New York: Modern Lib., 1931).



variables not under the investigator's control determine a certain response or set of responses. Empirical explanations tend to rest satisfied with the description of surface phenomena. This is more particularly true when those phenomena are stated statistically. Theoretical explanations, those that employ logical constructs, are more likely to probe beneath the surface of behavior to its underlying dynamic situation.

There are psychologists who do not employ constructs in their research, preferring instead to hew close to the observable data. This attitude is highly commendable in many cases. There are two objections, however, to a rigid adherence to strict empiricism. In the first place, although there are satisfactory and unsatisfactory constructs, to reject them all is not logical.<sup>3</sup> In the second place, the history of science shows that such concepts have been used extensively in all fields of science, and that this use has resulted in the discovery of important functional interrelations holding between empirical or experimental variables. The test of the adequacy of a theoretical construct is the extent to which it enlarges man's understanding and control of the phenomena being investigated. The construct of a soul (Aristotle), an instinct (McDougall), or an *élan vital* (Bergson) does not further our understanding and control of human behavior; whereas the construct of "tension system" (Lewin), "excitatory potential" (Hull), or "brain field" (Köhler) does make these goals possible of achievement. The first set of constructs is vitalistic and mystical; the second is scientifically meaningful.

**Operational Definition.** Only time and experience will demonstrate whether operationism is to be evaluated as a significant contribution to scientific methodology. Meanwhile, we shall have to take seriously Pratt's observation: "Operationism is no panacea for the ills of psychological and social sciences."<sup>4</sup>

In its broadest meaning operationism has always characterized the scientific method, for it has simply urged the investigator to be exceedingly cautious. The difference between the operationism of the past and that of the present is that the latter has also instructed the scientist *how* and *in what areas* of research the practice of caution should be exercised. To define a concept operationally is to define it in terms of some kind of *action*, rather than by means of an inherent trait allegedly possessed by the individual.

<sup>3</sup> See H. Woodrow, "The Problem of General Quantitative Laws in Psychology," *Psychol. Bull.*, 39 (1942), 1-27.

<sup>4</sup> C. C. Pratt, *The Logic of Modern Psychology*, 2nd printing (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 81.



Thus, instead of saying that a person *has* schizophrenia, we should describe his condition by saying that he *acts* in the manner of a schizophrenic individual, viz., apathetic and withdrawn. Apathy and withdrawnness, again, are not qualities that the patient possesses, but are ways of acting in certain situations. Operationally speaking, schizophrenia cannot be cured by eliminating the traits of the schizophrenic patient, but by helping him to interact with others in a more normal manner. An inferiority complex cannot be eliminated, but the person acting with fear and submission may be led to approach others with a confident attitude.

Operationism in its simplest form, then, defines its concepts not in terms of things, but in terms of processes and conditions. Applying this mode of analysis to the larger field of social psychology, we are obliged to view human behavior not as an attribute of the human organism but as a consequence of the sociocultural conditions under which it occurs.<sup>5</sup>

The value of operational definitions in social psychology lies in the fact that they avoid the use of substantive terms to describe the process of behavior. They help to counteract, as Wendell Johnson points out, the subject-predicate mode of analysis. To quote:

To say that Henry is mean implies that he has some sort of inherent trait, but it tells us nothing about what Henry has done. Consequently it fails to suggest any specific means of improving Henry. If, on the other hand, it is said that Henry snatched Billy's cap and threw it in the bonfire, the situation is rendered somewhat more clear and actually more hopeful. You might never eliminate "meanness," but there are fairly definite steps to be taken in order to remove Henry's incentives or opportunities for throwing caps in bonfires.<sup>6</sup>

**General Techniques of Investigation.** As we brought out in Chapter 1, the method of social psychology does not differ fundamentally from the method of the other sciences. Its aim is to arrive at reliable conclusions regarding human behavior and to state its conclusions as clearly and precisely as the nature of its subject matter will permit. In view of the fact, however, that the data and subject matter of social psychology—the study of the individual in his interactional relationships

<sup>5</sup> The student who wishes to acquaint himself with the more detailed formulations of operationism, especially as it is applied in physics, should consult P. W. Bridgman, *The Logic of Modern Physics* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), particularly chap. i.

<sup>6</sup> W. Johnson, *People in Quandaries* (New York: Harper, 1946), p. 220. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



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with other individuals in a specific group—are different from those of the physical sciences, the social psychologist has found it necessary to devise his own techniques. We shall now examine three general techniques used in our science. Later, we shall consider projective techniques and those used in attitude measurement.

*The case history technique.* This technique, while never popular with academic psychologists, has been a favorite and valuable method of social and clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, guidance experts, vocational counselors, and social case workers. It rests on the principle, one particularly stressed by the psychoanalysts, that an individual's behavior cannot be adequately understood without a knowledge of his past history. The data recorded in case histories have become fairly standardized. They usually include information regarding family, national origin, economic and social status, education, religion, physical condition, and the like.<sup>7</sup>

Case material is drawn from a large number of sources: autobiographies, personal correspondence, diaries, interviews, questionnaires, the records of social service agencies, courts, prisons, mental hospitals, and schools. Particular attention is called here to the autobiography, for this method, more often than any other historical technique, probes deep into the inner feelings and private thoughts and aspirations of an individual. Contrary to a widespread impression, autobiographical material is not too difficult to obtain, especially when the anonymity of its writer is assured in advance. Not infrequently there is no other technique, barring psychoanalysis, that enables us to plumb to the bottom of some of the deepest reactions and experiences of an individual and, for the study of personality, some of the most significant and complex.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, we cannot be certain of the validity of the case history technique in the study of human behavior.<sup>9</sup> One shortcoming of this approach is that the memory distortions of the subject and other informers inevitably result in some falsification of the record. Nevertheless, even an

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<sup>7</sup> See J. Dollard, *Criteria for the Life History* (New York: Yale University Press, 1935). For a statement of his seven criteria for a satisfactory case history, see p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> See G. W. Allport, *Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science*, Social Science Research Council Bulletin 49 (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942).

<sup>9</sup> See Paul Horst, *The Prediction of Personal Adjustment*, Social Science Research Council Bulletin 48 (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1941), especially Part Two, Supplementary Study A, by Paul Wallin, pp. 181-239.

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exaggeration and distortion often will throw significant light upon the subject's inner life. Stagner has called attention to this situation. He writes:

... it has been found that a person may report that he was severely punished as a child, when reasonably impartial observers agree that such was not the case. Such a report is not objectively valid, but it is significant of the individual's *beliefs* about how he was treated. *An imaginary trauma may be just as important in personality as one of objective character.*<sup>10</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn is that case studies, despite their defects, are important sources of data regarding individuals, and, if used discriminately, can add to our understanding of human behavior.

*The statistical technique.* The statistical manipulation of data consists essentially in expressing them in numerical or quantitative form. The statistician tries to find out how frequently a certain phenomenon occurs. For this purpose he uses three special techniques of measurement: averages and trends, measures of variability, and correlations.

When the psychologist measures, say, personality traits, he soon discovers that the largest number of individuals are grouped around a central point on his scale and that the number of individuals possessing either more or less than this amount of the measured trait decreases in frequency on both sides of the central point. This grouping around a central point represents the *average* number of times the trait has occurred.

Not all traits group around this central tendency; many of them deviate from it. The deviation from the central tendency is known as *variability* or dispersion. Thus mental patients are said to deviate from the tendency toward the average; they possess traits that are dispersed about the normal or statistically average trend.

If the psychologist desires to learn what factors are associated with mental disorder, and he finds, for instance, that sexual maladjustments occur very frequently, he speaks of the association between the two phenomena as a *correlation*. He says that mental disorder is correlated with sexual maladjustment. Correlation is essentially a technique for measuring the degree of relationship obtaining between two sets of related data. If the correlation is well established, i.e., if there are adequate data supporting the relationship existing between two sets of data, it may attain the status of a law.

The last statement requires the qualification of a cautious attitude. The

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<sup>10</sup> By permission from *Psychology of Personality*, by Ross Stagner. Copyright, 1948. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. P. 56.



student must learn to understand that even if a high degree of correlation between two sets of phenomena has been demonstrated to exist, the relationship does not necessarily imply a causal connection between them. Furthermore, if only a small number of units is employed in measuring relationships, the correlation may occur purely by chance. It is a good working principle not to assume the existence of a correlation unless it is based on no fewer than twenty identifiable units, or is found to be present in a number of different studies.<sup>11</sup>

*The diagnostic method.* The diagnostic method of the study of personality is an intensive study of the individual case. While such a study can yield valuable knowledge, and the diagnosis of a large number of cases may lead to generalizations of wide application, the diagnostic procedure is concerned fundamentally with unique characteristics. The motive underlying the individual emphasis is fundamentally utilitarian: the diagnostician usually approaches the individual personality as a problem in therapy. We shall describe here two diagnostic techniques, the psychoanalytic and the "client-centered."

In the *psychoanalytic technique*, which was invented by Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, the individual (who is almost always a patient seeking psychological readjustment) expresses freely his thoughts, emotions, and dreams as they come into his field of consciousness. The analyst usually sits by in silence and tries to interpret, in accordance with certain basic principles and assumptions, the meaning of the patient's more or less hidden mental content.

Psychoanalysis proceeds on the assumption that the frustrations of childhood impulses result in the development of permanent personality characteristics. The manner in which the child reacts to these frustrations is carried into adulthood and makes the individual largely what he is.

The psychoanalysts hold that there is in each of us an opposition between the sexual and the ego impulses. The sexual impulses strive for free and uninhibited expression, whereas the ego impulses are more "realistic" and strive to bring the sexual impulses into line with socially approved methods of expression. Because of this conflict, a great many socially unacceptable impulses are forced into the unconscious mind. These impulses, not being

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<sup>11</sup> For a brief and lucid discussion of statistics on an elementary level, especially as it applies to the study of individual differences, correlations, and interrelations within the individual, see J. F. Dashiell, *Fundamentals of General Psychology*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1949), chap. vi.



integrated into the psychic economy of the individual, are the source of conflicts that may lead to nonadjustive or maladjustive behavior.

The psychoanalysts believe that because of his many frustrations the human individual resorts to the mechanism of dreaming, for dreams are fulfillments of wishes. As a result of our social attitudes toward sex, many of our dreams and fantasies are sexual in nature.

The complicated exploration of the personality, whereby the individual by a technique of free association reveals his unconscious trends to the more or less silent analyst who interprets them, is the psychoanalytic method of investigating human personality.

The *client-centered diagnosis* is a modified form of the psychoanalytic technique and was devised by C. R. Rogers.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the psychoanalytic technique, in which the analyst occasionally takes an active part either by initiating the course of free association or by interpreting unconscious trends to the patient, the client-centered diagnosis permits the interviewer to be only a silent, interested listener. By this technique, according to its exponents and defenders, the client comes to discover, unaided by the interviewer, the source of his own problems and the means to their solution. Under the free and permissive psychological conditions of the client-centered interview, the individual has the opportunity to reconstruct his perceptual field and the manner in which he perceives himself. In this reorganized perceptual field the individual has an opportunity to alter his behavior along adjustive or constructive lines. This alteration is not influenced by the counselor's guidance, as in a psychoanalytic session, but arises out of the individual's own ego-integrative forces, which can be freely mobilized in the noncritical and relaxed atmosphere of the clinical interview.

**Projective Techniques.** Although projective techniques were used by Rorschach<sup>13</sup> at least as early as 1921, it is only since 1939 that they have been used extensively and that the term *projective* has been used to describe them. In that year L. K. Frank published a comprehensive study of them as they apply to the study of personality.<sup>14</sup>

Implicit in the construction and administration of projective tests is the postulate that personality is a structured whole. On the basis of this assumption

<sup>12</sup> C. R. Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

<sup>13</sup> Hermann Rorschach, *Psychodiagnostik* (Leipzig: Ernst Bircher Verlag, 1921).

<sup>14</sup> L. K. Frank, "Projective Methods for the Study of Personality," *J. Psychol.*, 8 (1939), 389-413. See also Helen Sargeant, "Projective Methods: Their Origins, Theory, and Application in Personality Research," *Psychol. Bull.*, 5 (1945), 257-293.



tion tests of personality should reveal its organizational trend rather than more or less isolated traits. Since the degree and the direction of structuring presumably vary from person to person, each individual will project himself into a test situation in a different manner. This variation will reveal his personality and his differentiation from others. In a projective test, every individual will see in the stimulus situation, which is purposely ambiguous, what he is predisposed to see; and he will interpret the stimulus situation in accordance with his own private view of its meaning.

*The Rorschach test.* This test consists of ten cards, each containing an ink blot that is irregular in outline, symmetrical, and varied in shading. Each ink blot is theoretically free from cultural influences and therefore subject to highly individual interpretation. When presented with a card, the subject is asked to report what he sees, or what the blot makes him think of. After the individual has given a response to each ink blot, it is necessary to determine what factors may have influenced his responses, such as the location of each item on the card and the influence of form, color, and shading. Such factors as the perception of large or small details, perception of ink blots as whole masses, color response, etc., are thought to be indicative of personality tendencies. Thus, if a subject tends to see an ink blot as a mass or whole he is given to abstract thinking; if he "prefers" small details, he is critically minded.<sup>15</sup> If kinaesthetic qualities are predominant the subject is said to possess a high degree of imagination and creativeness. If color responses are very numerous, the individual is emotionally outgoing. Combinations of two or more responses also have great significance. Thus, if form and color go together, the subject has an integrated, objective, and emotional disposition; if many color-form responses are present, with color predominant, the individual is emotionally uncontrolled.

<sup>15</sup> Curiously enough, attention to details may also be indicative of preoccupation with trifles, and the perception of wholes may be a symptom of brain injury. Obviously only a careful interpretation of *all* the responses in *their interrelationship* can yield a consistent and reasonably reliable picture of the individual personality.

For some studies of the reliability of the Rorschach test the student should consult the following references: P. E. Vernon, "The Rorschach Ink-blot Test," *Brit. J. Med. Psychol.*, 13 (1933), 89-118, 179-200, 271-291; G. R. Thornton and J. P. Guilford, "Reliability and Meaning of Erlebnistypus Scores in Rorschach Test," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 31 (1936), 324-330; I. A. Fosberg, "An Experimental Study of the Reliability of the Rorschach Psychodiagnostic Technique," *Rorschach Res. Exch.*, 5 (1941), 72-84; and Ruth L. Munroe, "Prediction of the Adjustment and Academic Performance of College Students by a Modification of the Rorschach Method," *Appl. Psychol. Monogr.*, No. 7, 1945.



Three broad estimates of the Rorschach technique follow: (1) Some of the worst, though unwitting, enemies of the Rorschach method are its prejudiced and overenthusiastic supporters. Their extravagant claims have aroused skepticism in those students of personality whose chief concern is the scientific investigation of human behavior rather than a doctrine to defend. (2) The reliability of form, movement, color, etc., as indices of the inner trends of the personality has been, on the whole, adequately demonstrated.<sup>16</sup> (3) As a general, all-round test of the personality as a whole, the Rorschach technique has justified its more moderate claims. More recently it has demonstrated its validity in the diagnosis of primitive people, an achievement that increases its usefulness in the study of behavior and culture.<sup>17</sup>

*The Thematic Apperception Test.* This test, commonly referred to as the TAT test, was devised by H. A. Murray at the Harvard Psychological Clinic in collaboration with C. D. Morgan and was published in 1935.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the Rorschach test, which elicits the structural aspects of personality, the Thematic Apperception Test discloses the active sentiments, images, and aspirations of the individual. Like the Rorschach test, however, it is based on the familiar fact that an individual confronted by an ambiguous stimulus situation tends unwittingly to betray the dominant trends of his inner life. While he is preoccupied with explaining the pictures before him, he loses much of his normal circumspection and self-consciousness and freely develops "themas" that articulate his inner strivings.

The test consists of thirty pictures—ten for men, ten for women, and

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance M. R. Hertz, "Reliability of Rorschach Ink-Blot Test," *J. Appl. Psychol.*, 18 (1934), 461-477; Meyer Williams, "An Experimental Study of Intellectual Control under Stress and Associated Rorschach Factors," *J. Consult. Psychol.*, 11 (1947), 21-29; L. M. Baker and Jane S. Harris, "The Validation of Rorschach Test Results against Laboratory Behavior," *J. Clin. Psychol.*, 5 (1949), 161-164.

<sup>17</sup> See Dr. Emil Oberholzer's use of the Rorschach test on thirty-eight inhabitants of Alor as described by Cora DuBois, *The People of Alor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), pp. 588-640. Its usefulness with neurotics and psychotics is increasing. See S. J. Beck, "Personality Structure in Schizophrenia: A Rorschach Investigation on 81 Patients and 64 Controls," *Nerv. Ment. Dis. Monogr.*, No. 63, 1938; W. A. Varvel, "The Rorschach Test in Psychotic and Neurotic Depressions," *Bull. Menninger Clin.*, 5 (1941), 5-12; F. R. Miale and M. R. Harrower-Erickson, "Personality Structure in the Psychoneuroses," *Rorschach Res. Exch.*, 4 (1940), 71-74.

<sup>18</sup> See C. D. Morgan and H. A. Murray, "A Motion for Investigating Fantasies: The Thematic Apperception Test," *Arch. Neurol. Psychiat.*, 34 (1935), 289-306. See also H. A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).



ten for both men and women. The pictures are presented one at a time, and the subject is asked to construct a theme or plot suggested to him by the picture—what the character in the picture is doing, thinking, or feeling, what motives the subject may impute to him, what the outcome of the story will be, etc. The imagination of the subject is quite free to fabricate any plot, logical or illogical, probable or improbable; it is controlled only to the extent that the subject reacts to the concrete pictures themselves.

Let us consider one picture by way of illustration. This picture shows a woman standing at an open door. Her head is bowed and her face is completely buried in her right hand as if she were deeply grieved. Her left hand holds the opened door, suggesting that she is just emerging from a dark place which could be either another room or the outdoors. What does it suggest? Is she leaving the room where her child is lying ill—or dead? Or has she just had an unhappy encounter with her husband? Could it be that she is just entering her house from outside, and she weeps because of a lovers' quarrel? Might it be that her sweetheart, or her husband, has just gone to war? Is she perchance ill, and does her position indicate her suffering? Or is she perhaps drunk? Every person uses his own imagination in reacting to the picture. In this way he reveals his inner tendencies and the manner in which he perceives objective life situations and the motives of others.

The validation of the Thematic Apperception Test has proved to be exceedingly difficult. For one thing, the relation between an individual's themas and his personality is unusually complex. One cannot be certain how strongly the needs in the story and the dominant strivings of the subject are conjoined. For a second thing, it seems impossible, short of depth analysis, to uncover tendencies or strivings deeply embedded in the unconscious. Morgan and Murray themselves report only a single case in which thematic apperceptions foreshadowed the results of several months of depth analysis.<sup>19</sup> More tractable features, such as attitudes and interests, were deducible with a high degree of success from the themas of mental patients when the stories themselves were compared with the patients' clinical case records.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Morgan and Murray, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> See R. Harrison, "Studies in the Use and Validity of the Thematic Apperception Test with Mentally Disordered Patients: II. A Quantitative Validity Study; III. Validation by the Method of 'Blind Analysis,'" *Character and Pers.*, 9 (1940), 122-138. See further, R. H. White, "Interpretation of Imaginative Productions," in J. McV. Hunt, *Personality and the Behavior Disorders* (New York: Ronald, 1944), Vol. I, pp. 235-238.



Like the Rorschach test the TAT can give us valuable insights into personality; for, unlike many interviews and depth analyses, the thematic apperceptions can sometimes yield quickly the deep wishes and strivings of an individual without prodding and without self-consciousness. As Murphy points out, the test "may be regarded clinically as a first form of life history and as an indicator of present needs, and as such it is extremely valuable."<sup>21</sup>

**Attitude Measurement.** From a restricted point of view an attitude may be defined as a verbalized tendency, as a set of opinions organized around a value or system of values. Measuring attitudes then becomes the relatively simple task of recording and systematically relating the verbal statements of an individual concerning any object or value overtly perceived. This "recording and relating" would make up an individual's score, or cluster of scores, of opinions expressed in answer to specific questions.

*The questionnaire.* A questionnaire is a list of questions designed to elicit the facts at which the investigation is aimed. Too many questionnaires are hastily drawn up and violate some of the simplest principles of questionnaire construction. It takes time and skill to include only what is essential, to avoid items that are obvious and irrelevant. Care must be taken to frame each question in such a way that it has the same meaning to every respondent and permits the answers to be stated in countable units.

A questionnaire should be tested for reliability. Reliability means simple self-consistency of items on a questionnaire. An intelligence test, for example, is reliable when it shows uniform differences, or when, after repeated tests the individual's score remains fairly constant. Reliability is determined by means of the test-retest technique. This consists of using the questionnaire twice and comparing the results. In this connection, it is advisable not to give the questionnaire to the same informant more than once, because of the danger of introducing the memory factor and thereby affecting the response.

A questionnaire should, furthermore, be tested for validity. The questions on a questionnaire are valid when they actually measure what they are designed to measure. Thus an instrument for measuring an attitude on war or on communism is valid when it actually measures that attitude and not aggressiveness or radicalism in general. Validity may be tested by com-

<sup>21</sup> Gardner Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947), p. 672.



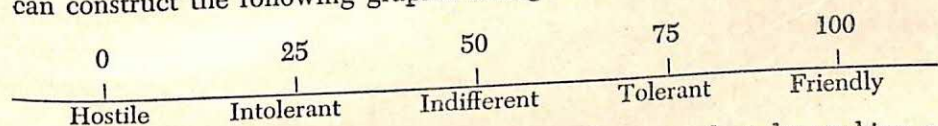
paring the scores on a questionnaire given to like groups of individuals with the scores of that questionnaire when given to an unlike group. Thus a valid test of learning capacity would be one that applied to all persons irrespective of cultural and similar differences. Another way of testing for validity is to secure the judgments of several experts. The most crucial test of validity, however, is to compare the respondent's verbal responses with his actual behavior with reference to the item being tested. Thus, a test of an individual's attitude toward the Negro is valid when it enables us to predict how the individual will behave in situations where his relations to Negroes are involved.

*The scale.* In the area of attitude measurement the scale is thus far the most satisfactory measuring device. It consists of a sequence of interchangeable units beginning with zero. Most scales in social psychology have been based on *rankings* or *ratings*.

*Ranking* is the arrangement of the units of a measurable quality in the order of amount. Thus, Smith is more prejudiced toward Negroes than Jones, Jones is more prejudiced than Brown, and so on. These are judgments and so are subject to the degree of accuracy and impartiality of the judges. Accordingly the reliability of the judgments is increased by taking the average rankings of several qualified judges.

*Rating* is the arrangement of items into ascending or ordered classes. This may be done by others or by oneself. In the latter case we call them *self-ratings*. It is advisable whenever possible to set up an odd number of classes in order to make a median class. A social psychologist may thus rank persons' attitudes toward Negroes as hostile, intolerant, indifferent, tolerant, and friendly.

One of the simplest scales based on rankings or ratings is the graphic rating scale. Using the above rankings of attitudes toward Negroes, we can construct the following graphic rating scale:



With this simple scale each judge rates each respondent by making a mark on the scale where in his judgment the respondent belongs. If there is sufficient agreement among the judges, then the rating of each respondent is the average of the ratings by the several judges.

An outstanding pioneer in the field of attitude measurement by the use of scales, the value of whose work has not diminished with the years, is Bogardus. Bogardus is a sociologically oriented social psychologist who,



under the influence of another sociologist, R. E. Park, made what are now the classical studies of "social distance." Social distance refers to the degree of acceptance or rejection of persons in group relationships.<sup>22</sup> The term was used by Bogardus in a more restricted meaning and applied only to the relations of members of different racial or ethnic groups, although Park gave it a broader meaning. Park defined social distance as the "grades and degrees of understanding and intimacy which characterize pre-social and social relations generally."<sup>23</sup> Thus the social distance between two close members of a fraternity would be at one end of the scale, or zero, and that between a prejudiced white man and a Negro would be at the other end of the scale.

In two well-known pioneer studies Bogardus attempted to put the degree of social distance into measurable form.<sup>24</sup> In one of these studies, 110 persons stemming from 39 racial or ethnic groups were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to admit into various degrees of relationships members from these different groups: into close kinship by marriage, as personal chums, as neighbors, into one's own occupation, to citizenship, as visitors to one's country only, or exclude them from the country. A sample of the highest and lowest Social Contact Range (S. C. R.) indexes is given below.

Highest and Lowest S. C. R. Indexes \*

.....			
<i>Highest</i>		<i>Lowest</i>	
English	4.60	Turkish	1.18
Canadian	4.55	Mulatto	1.26
Scotch	4.24	Korean	1.28
Irish	4.16	Hindu	1.30
Welsh	4.15	Negro	1.37
Scotch-Irish	4.12	Serbo-Croatian	1.42

.....  
\* From Bogardus, "Measuring Social Distances," p. 304. Reprinted by permission of The Journal Press, Provincetown, Massachusetts. The quantitative range is from 1.00 to 7.00 degrees of social distance.  
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<sup>22</sup> See the section on the cultural hybrid, chap. v.  
<sup>23</sup> R. E. Park, "The Concept of Social Distance," *J. Appl. Sociol.*, 8 (1923-1924), 339-344.  
<sup>24</sup> E. S. Bogardus, "Social Distance and Its Origins," *J. Appl. Sociol.*, 9 (1924-1925), 216-226; "Measuring Social Distances," 299-308.



The Bogardus scale has consistently shown a rather high reliability not only with respect to ethnic distances but also in general social relationships.<sup>25</sup>

The most complicated and, in some ways, one of the most exact scales for the measurement of attitudes is that of Thurstone. Because of the involved nature of the scale, or because the more simple scales correlate rather highly with it, this scale is not used frequently. Yet an investigator who aims at a high degree of accuracy will find Thurstone's technique highly rewarding.<sup>26</sup> Thurstone's technique is known as the *equal-appearing intervals* scale.<sup>27</sup>

The first step in the construction of this scale was to get a large number of propositions that expressed sentiments of approval or disapproval toward the church. The statements were sorted by a number of judges into categories from "very favorable" to "very unfavorable." Whenever the judges disagreed significantly over an item it was rejected. The finished scale had forty-five items distributed in fairly equal steps along the continuum of items. The subjects then checked the items of which they approved, and each subject's score was the median scale value of the items he checked. In this manner each subject was given a scale value which was a relative measure of the amount of approval or disapproval of the church.

We select a few items from the finished scale and reproduce them below:

Check ( ) every statement below that expresses your sentiment toward the church. Interpret the statements in accordance with your own experience with churches.

	<i>Scale value</i>
1. I think the teaching of the church is altogether too superficial to have much social significance.....	8.3
2. I feel the church services give me inspiration and help me to live up to my best during the following week.....	1.7
3. I believe in what the church teaches but with material reservation....	4.5

.....

<sup>25</sup> In a modified form of the above technique Coutu was able to measure occupational preferences—"occupational distance"—for certain professions. See W. Coutu, "The Relative Prestige of Twenty Professions as Judged by Three Groups of Professional Students," *Social Forces*, 14 (1936), 522-529.

<sup>26</sup> For a good critical analysis of Thurstone's attitude scale see R. K. Merton, "Fact and Factitiousness in Ethnic Opinionnaires," *Amer. Sociol. Rev.*, 5 (1940), 13-28.

<sup>27</sup> L. L. Thurstone, "Theory of Attitude Measurement," *Psychol. Rev.*, 36 (1929), 222-241; L. L. Thurstone and E. J. Chave, *The Measurement of Attitude* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).



- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 4. I do not receive any benefit from attending church services but I think it helps some people.....  | 5.7                |
| 5. I believe in religion but I seldom go to church.....   | 5.4                |
| 6. I regard the church as a static, crystallized institution and as such it is unwholesome and detrimental to society and the individual..... | 10.5               |
| 7. I believe church membership is almost essential to living life at its best.....  | 1.5                |
| 8. I believe the church is fundamentally sound but some of its adherents have given it a bad name.....  | 3.9                |
| 9. I think the church is a parasite on society.....   | 11.0 <sup>28</sup> |

A widely used attitude scale is that of Likert. This scale employs a larger number of items than the Thurstone scale and discards the method of scaling by several judges. Thus in determining a subject's attitude toward the use of force as an instrument for maintaining trade and status among nations, the subject indicates the degree of his agreement or disagreement with each statement on a five-point scale. His total score is the sum of the item values, weighted by how well each item in the scale differentiates those who agree from those who disagree with each statement.<sup>29</sup> An advantage of the weighted differential is that it tends to balance the tendency of some subjects to give extreme responses to the statements, either agreeing or disagreeing with most items.

The use of the questionnaire and the scale for attitude measurement raises the question as to whether we can measure an individual's attitude by measuring his verbal statements. The answer seems to be a qualified yes. The Thurstone technique fairly accurately measures a person's *emotional* reaction toward a value. Stagner, however, calls attention to the fact that "it is important to distinguish between one's attitude toward a verbal label and the attitude toward the psychological object independently of the stereotyped label."<sup>30</sup> If this caution is carefully observed, the methods we have described are adequate and useful.

*Interpretive methods.* Interpretive methods are attempts to elicit a subject's attitudes without his awareness of the investigator's purpose. Unlike the verbal report technique, in which the investigator structures the subject's responses by narrowing them to the prescribed limits of the questionnaire, the interpretive technique permits the subject

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<sup>28</sup> Thurstone and Chave, p. 61. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press.

<sup>29</sup> R. Likert, "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes," *Arch. Psychol.*, No. 140, 1932.

<sup>30</sup> Stagner, *op. cit.*, p. 203.



to structure his own responses. However, these responses are not random or capricious. On the contrary there are certain agreed-upon indicators which reveal the subject's attitudes and which can be carefully scored.

Interpretive techniques have been used more or less systematically at least since the time of Galton.<sup>31</sup> Freudian psychoanalysts from the very beginning of their science have plumbed the unconscious wishes and attitudes of their patients. Indeed, they have always considered the hidden and often distorted unconscious tendencies a better index of an individual's mental set than his behavior. The investigations of Bartlett have shown that the perceptual distortions of an individual reflect the tendency in everyone to perceive his environment in terms of motives and attitudes.<sup>32</sup>

For convenience, interpretive methods may be divided into two main kinds, namely, *projective stimuli* and *expressive behavior*. Two studies of picture interpretation might be chosen, for their interest if not their conclusiveness, to illustrate the projective stimuli technique of attitude measurement. Fromme compared his subjects' responses to a questionnaire on preventing war with their interpretation of thematic, or pictorial, material dealing with vaguely and remotely similar material. For example, one picture depicted a cemetery with ghosts hovering above the graves and a sentry at the gate. Fromme found a close correlation between his subjects' nationalistic and aggressive responses on the questionnaire and their interpretations of the pictorial material.<sup>33</sup> Since the pictures could be interpreted in a variety of ways, the assumption is that what a subject sees in a picture is not what is there but what he projects into it as a result of his inner tendencies.

Proshansky applied the thematic technique in testing attitudes toward labor. The subjects were presented with pictures which, aside from showing laborers in conflict situations, were wholly ambiguous. Then they were asked to describe their impressions of what the pictures represented. The descriptions ranged from very favorable to very unfavorable descriptions of the laborers. The themes were then evaluated by three judges to determine the subjects' favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward labor. The ratings of all the subjects were next correlated with their scores on a ques-

<sup>31</sup> See F. Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (London: Dent, 1883).

<sup>32</sup> F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study of Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

<sup>33</sup> A. Fromme, "On the Use of Certain Qualitative Methods of Attitude Research: A Study of Opinions on the Methods of Preventing War," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 13 (1941), 429-459.



tionnaire specifically designed to elicit their attitudes toward labor. The correlation coefficient for one group was as high as  $+.87$ , indicating that the questionnaire and the projective techniques were measuring the same inner tendencies of the subjects.<sup>34</sup>

The free association technique is another projective method that has been used in determining attitudes. Stagner reports an unpublished study by Alfred Shaklee in which this technique was employed. Shaklee's subjects were required to mark an attitude scale, reread the statements, and relate further associations with them. Thus a subject who responded with a "yes" to the suggestion that our country build a powerful military force, associated the following with the proposal: "I think there is an analogy between the law-abiding citizen and peace-loving nation, the gangster element and the *militaristic* nation. We must hold a club over the head of warlike nations as we do over gangsters' heads as this is the only thing they will understand."<sup>35</sup> The association indicates the cluster of ideas that impelled the subject to give his positive response. It also reveals, according to Stagner, "the dissociation which makes possible the advocacy of extreme militarism at home while condemning militaristic trends abroad."<sup>36</sup>

The second kind of interpretive method is that of *expressive behavior*. We are using this term in a narrower sense than the term "expressive movement" as used by Allport and Vernon.<sup>37</sup> Most of the expressive behavior tests measure broad categories of behavior, such as "temperament" or the personality itself. There are practically no expressive behavior tests that measure attitudes as such.

A simple test of the expressive behavior type is Mira's drawing test, called "myokinetic psychodiagnosis." In this test a blindfolded subject draws ten lines with each hand, the lines directed toward or away from the subject, upward or downward, and right or left. Lines directed away from the subject indicate an aggressive attitude toward others; lines directed toward the subject indicate self-aggressive or suicidal trends. Those individuals whose strokes were directed upward were generally elated, euphoric; whereas those whose strokes went downward were generally depressed.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> H. M. Proshansky, "A Projective Method for the Study of Attitudes," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 38 (1943), 393-395.

<sup>35</sup> Stagner, *op. cit.*, p. 208. Quoted from A. Shaklee, unpublished paper, University of Colorado, 1939.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>37</sup> G. W. Allport and P. E. Vernon, *Studies in Expressive Movement* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).

<sup>38</sup> E. Mira, "Myokinetic Psychodiagnosis," *Proc. Roy. Soc. Med.*, 33 (1940), 173-194.



Since Mira's subjects were abnormal cases, it is impossible to tell whether these tests would measure similar trends in well-adjusted individuals. Nevertheless, they do indicate certain attitudes, a point not altered by the fact that the subjects were abnormal.

Another test of the expressive type is that used by Krout. It is fundamentally a study of gestural responses, or "autistic gestures." While these autistic gestures are directed toward oneself, they nevertheless indicate certain attitudes toward others. Among such autistic gestures, of which Krout recorded more than three hundred, were adjusting one's glasses, shuffling one's feet, and yawning. Although such gestures appear on the surface to be trivial, they reflect, according to Krout, inner dispositions toward external situations. Thus, adjusting one's glasses, which may originally have been a normal response to the discomfort of wearing them, may on later occasions symbolize annoyance by another person. Yawning, which may originally have been an expression of sleepiness or fatigue, may later indicate boredom in the company of another. Since normally we cannot tell our friends that they annoy or bore us, we inhibit our responses and express them in symbolic or concealed forms. That this is a plausible explanation was demonstrated by Krout's method of checking his hypothesis. He hypnotized his subjects and asked them to reproduce the gestures they had made during an interview with the experimenter. They reproduced the gestures with such unfailing accuracy—almost 100 per cent—that neither chance nor an extraordinary memory could account for it. The conclusion is that these apparently trivial gestures are not merely free-floating activities but firmly anchored dispositions toward certain kinds of objective situations.<sup>39</sup>

Other forms of expressive behavior analysis could be cited to indicate the use of the interpretive technique in studying attitudes. The conclusion to be drawn from the use of both the verbal report—questionnaire and scale—and the interpretive techniques is that they are the best instruments that scientists have devised up to now, and we should use them intelligently and with knowledge of their limitations. The verbal report technique has been demonstrated to yield a much more accurate index of attitudes than the interpretive method. It is a mistake, however, to dismiss the latter because it is essentially a qualitative method. Perhaps experience will prove that the most satisfactory—that is, the scientifically most adequate—method is one that combines the verbal report and the interpretive techniques and thus gives us at once an extensive and intensive measurement of attitudes.

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<sup>39</sup> M. H. Krout, "Autistic Gestures," *Psychol. Monogr.*, 46 (1935), p. 208.



A final and most important fact to remember concerning attitude measurement is that attitudes themselves are not static dispositions but are always a function of the social pressures or frames of reference of a cultural milieu. As the social atmosphere changes, the attitude which emerged in it takes on a different color. What was once a radical attitude may become under changed sociocultural conditions a conservative dogma.<sup>40</sup>

## A Framework for the Study of Human Behavior

Every science has, either implicitly or explicitly, a set of assumptions with which it carries on its research and by means of which it orders its data into a meaningful system or science. Without such a conceptual scheme research becomes mere fact-grubbing, without any discernible pattern or design. The ordering of data by means of an organizing concept or concepts into a systematic statement of the underlying forces which operate to bring about certain events is called a framework. A framework is thus a concept, or set of interrelated concepts, which guides research and analysis in science. These concepts refer to entities or processes in the unobservable world which, if existent, would help us to account for or "explain" entities or events in the observable world. In this sense a framework is a device the value of which is determined by the results it helps us to achieve, by the extent to which it successively approximates the verifiable segment of reality we are investigating. It facilitates thinking in scientific research.

Physical science uses conceptual schemes readily in its investigations. Einstein and Infeld describe the scientist's use of a framework very clearly. They write:

In our endeavor to understand reality we are somewhat like a man trying to understand the mechanism of a closed watch. He sees the face and the moving hands, even hears its ticking, but he has no way of opening the case. If he is ingenious he may form some picture of a mechanism which could be responsible for all the things he observes, but he may never be quite sure his picture is the only one which could explain his observations. . . . But he certainly believes that, as his knowledge increases, his picture of reality will become simpler and simpler and will explain a wider and wider range of his sensuous impressions.<sup>41</sup>

Inside the "closed watch," the physical world, accounting for its action, are electrons, protons, Brownian movements, and the like. They are the con-

<sup>40</sup> See K. Mannheim, *op. cit.* Attitudes are discussed at length in chap. vii.

<sup>41</sup> A. Einstein and L. Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. 33. Reprinted by permission of Leopold Infeld.



cepts, the assumed entities or processes, which for the time being are hypothecated to explain the scientist's observations. In the field of psychology, concepts also play a prominent part. Instinct for a long time was an important explanatory principle of human behavior.

The framework we employ is far less abstract than the basic assumptions of modern physics. Comparatively speaking, our concepts refer to entities or processes which are easily observable, even though their exact relationships to human behavior are not always easy to discover. This framework aims to account for human behavior, not in terms of a single concept, but as the resultant of the dynamic interrelation of three factors—the biological heritage, social interaction, and cultural conditioning.

### The Biological Heritage of Man

One of the most fruitless arguments in the behavioral sciences is that which concerns itself with the problem of heredity versus environment. The verbal fencing it involves is all the more regrettable in view of the fact that not even the geneticist, for whom it is natural to emphasize heredity, describes the latter as a simple process of the transmission of biophysical traits. It behooves the social psychologist, who approaches the study of human behavior from an anthropological or sociological point of view, to take the biological heritage of man seriously, and to account for human conduct on the basis of the intertwining of biologically inherited potentialities and socioculturally transmitted influences. Biological structures of the human organism are responsible in part for differences in intelligence, learning, drive-intensity, and the like. They probably play a part in an individual's predisposition toward certain types of psychosomatic disturbances.<sup>42</sup>

It is impossible at the present stage of our knowledge to determine exactly what features of the total personality are inherited. Personality is a highly complex system, and it is most difficult to factor out specific traits which can be traced to genetic determination. Yet it is specific rather than general traits which, according to modern genetic theory, are transmitted from parent to offspring. In view of this difficulty in factoring out specific traits, it is theoretically advisable to consider biological factors not as causative or even determining but as *limiting* factors in the development of personality. The genetic equipment of an individual, from this point of

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<sup>42</sup> See H. Jost and L. W. Sontag, "The Genetic Factors in Autonomic Nervous-system Function," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 6 (1944), pp. 308-313.



view, places a limit on the extent to which environmental factors can influence the course of personality development. Thus, the effect of his social surroundings on a child with a diseased or injured nervous system will be quite different from that on a child with a healthy and intact nervous system. From this point of view, then, genetic factors do not cause or determine personality; they only set up limits beyond which the environment can have no effective influence on or control over the individual's psychological development.

Inasmuch as it is impossible in all but a few cases to determine the extent to which behavior characteristics are products of an individual's germ plasm, it is not necessary for us to discuss the complex problem of the role of heredity in human behavior. We may conveniently narrow our concern in heredity to a consideration of those constitutional or physiological factors that are assumed to play a role in behavior.

**Musculature.** What part do the muscles play in human behavior? Enough to be taken seriously. The degree of stability or of tension of personality is considerably a matter of muscle tonus. When the muscles maintain their tonus, the individual feels relaxed. During fear or excitement there is a great increase of muscle activity, especially of the smooth muscles of the intestines and stomach. Guthrie and Edwards put the matter succinctly as follows: "Muscles contract. They do other things as well, but the major activity of muscles is to shorten. By contracting they move the body, expel air and take it in, make the vocal chords vibrate, do things to the outside world, communicate with other men."<sup>43</sup>

**Glandular Activities.** A very important set of response organs is the glandular system. Glands manufacture a variety of chemical substances which affect the disposition or "temperament" of the individual. Our concern in this section is only with the endocrine, or ductless, glands, which secrete hormones directly into the blood stream, where they affect other processes, such as body growth, sexual activity, calcium metabolism, and sugar deposit in the blood.

Many disorders of behavior are attributable to the malfunctioning of the ductless glands. If, for instance, the thyroid gland is sluggish or underactive, this condition results in such behavior manifestations as diminution of mental and physical activity, a tendency toward obesity, excessive drowsiness, and the like. If, on the other hand, the thyroid gland is overactive,

<sup>43</sup> E. R. Guthrie and Allen L. Edwards, *Psychology: A First Course in Behavior* (New York: Harper, 1949), p. 49.



the resulting symptoms usually are overactivity, irritability, restlessness, and insomnia.

**The Nervous System.** Connecting the receptors and effectors<sup>44</sup> is an intricate network of neurons and synapses which is called the nervous system. There are actually two such systems, the central and autonomic. The *central* nervous system consists of the brain and the spinal cord. It is the center of all the pathways and connections through which impulses are transmitted from receptors to effectors. The *autonomic* nervous system controls the activities of the glands and viscera (heart, liver, stomach, intestines, etc.).

The central nervous system is the basis of intelligence and learning, and has, in the long process of evolution, been one of the most important factors in man's successful struggle for survival. Because of his much greater capacity to learn and to devise new modes of adjustment, man has had an enormous advantage over all other animals. Without this intricate and superior nervous system, man, even if he had lived in a society, would hardly have been able to invent language, tools, and other techniques for controlling his environment. Indeed, one of the truly significant differences between man and other animals is man's greater capacity to learn and his ability to invent and use words. These are, it should be noted, biological endowments, not acquired abilities.<sup>45</sup>

**Basic Needs of the Organism.** Every living organism is characterized by the presence of tensions which we call needs, drives, or motives. A drive is a state of disequilibrium of the organism. Every organism strives to restore equilibrium, to reduce the tensions which characterize the disequilibrium, to satisfy its wants. At the beginning, the infant's perceptions and actions are governed almost completely by a "determination" to satisfy his tissue needs. There is evidence to show that the very young infant is practically unaffected in any selective way by those

<sup>44</sup> We have omitted a discussion of the sense organs or receptors because descriptions of them are readily available in introductory textbooks in psychology. It might be pointed out that the receptors (specialized structures which receive stimuli from the outside world) and the effectors (glands, muscles) constitute the end organs of a complete sensory-motor arc.

<sup>45</sup> To say that the ability to invent words is a biological endowment is not to minimize the social character of language. Very likely man would not have invented a language to talk to himself. The *capacity* to invent words, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, however, must at the present stage of our knowledge be interpreted as a part of man's native endowment.



around him. His chief concern is the satisfaction of biogenic needs.<sup>46</sup> Throughout his life span the human individual is influenced in many ways by such fundamental biogenic needs as hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex. No matter how they are canalized by social imperatives or inhibited by the operation of social taboos, they are an inescapable element in the total organization of human behavior. Indeed, the maintenance of sheer life is dependent on the constant restoration of equilibrium to the organism through the satisfaction of its basic drives. These drives or physiological conditions are thus important conditions of human behavior. They show that human beings are creatures of physiological activities as well as of social expectations. To the extent, then, that human behavior is affected by basic physiological needs or "animal" drives, the social psychologist must assign some importance to them.<sup>47</sup>

**Interpretation of Original Nature.** The foregoing remarks on man's physical endowments demand further analysis. Heredity, constitutional factors, reaction tendencies, and the like cannot be lined up on one side and contrasted with environment, acquired dispositions, and man's social nature on the other side. If there is one thing that stands out in recent discussions of this problem it is that the two are inseparable. "Not heredity versus environment, but development,"<sup>48</sup> is the significant fact for social psychologists to remember. From the developmental point of view, what the next stage in the evolution of personality will be depends upon the complex interaction of the organism with its environment. This leaves the effects of both heredity and environment indeterminate when viewed in the perspective of organic and social evolution. What will take place is a function of the interplay of these two variables. What is original nature today may, as a consequence of greater knowledge and control of

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<sup>46</sup> A. Gesell and H. Thompson, *Infant Behavior, Its Genesis and Growth* (New York: McCraw-Hill, 1934), p. 287.

<sup>47</sup> Here once more the physiological factor is not wholly autonomous. While physiological drives are undoubtedly innate, they cannot function adequately—indeed sometimes not at all—in social isolation. The satisfaction of hunger and thirst in the infant and of sex in the adult is dependent on others. Thus even physiological processes require for their completion the counter acts of other individuals. Physiological drives are not wholly physiological, but have a social dimension as well.

<sup>48</sup> Dashiell, *op. cit.*, p. 62. See further, J. H. Woodger, *Biological Principles* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929); W. Kohler, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Liveright, 1929); L. von Bertalanffy, *Theoretische Biologie* (Berlin: Gebruder Borntrager, 1932); A. Myerson, *Social Psychology* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934); J. F. Brown, *Psychology and the Social Order* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936).



embryological factors, become acquired human nature tomorrow. This is the operational view of the problem of heredity and environment. It emphasizes the fact that inherently nothing is fixed and permanent.<sup>49</sup>

The weight of research is in favor of multiple causation in personality development. It demands that we take an intermediate stand between extreme environmentalism and extreme hereditarianism, and that the intermediate position lean toward the environmentalist side. For those who have a definite position at either extreme to defend, this is apparently not easy. A good illustration of this situation is found in Kallmann's study of schizophrenia. He presents the results of a very careful and comprehensive study of the genetics of this disorder. Even though his later results do not harmonize with his earlier conclusions that schizophrenia is inherited according to Mendelian laws, he refuses to relinquish the idea altogether. Mental disease, he still believes despite the evidence against the conclusion, is inherited.<sup>50</sup>

There are two preconceptions at work in human psychology which result in confusion and erroneous conclusions. One is the *neurophysiological bias*. This is the view that argues for the constitutional or organic nature of human personality. Workers who approach human behavior from this perspective are particularly impressed by demonstrations of neuropathology or brain lesions that are connected with some forms of mental disorder. From this kind of evidence they generalize concerning human behavior as a whole.

The other preconception is the *sociological fallacy*. Many sociologists, partly because of their ignorance of biological data and partly because of hasty generalizations based upon sociological and anthropological evidence, are too strongly impressed by the great variability of human behavior. In this frame of mind they tend to minimize the organic conditions of behavior and maximize its sociocultural origin.

Those of us taking an intermediate position believe that human behavior is a *biosocial* process. We believe that the behavior of the individual cannot be adequately explained either in terms of organic factors as described by the biologist or on the basis of social interaction as described by the sociologist. On the contrary, we must always add another perspective to our analysis: we must try to explain his behavior in terms of what experience *means* to the biosocial person, as that meaning is derived from the total field of the individual-in-his-environment.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>50</sup> F. J. Kallmann, *The Genetics of Schizophrenia* (New York: Augustin, 1938).



## Social Interaction

Social interaction is a fundamental and strategic concept in contemporary social psychology. This is as it should be, for it makes up the very essence of personality and interpersonal relations. Man is truly and fundamentally a social being, not by virtue of any biological endowment, but by reason of his participation in a social group.

**General Nature of Social Interaction.** Social interaction is a type of relationship between two or more persons in which the behavior of one is modified by the behavior of the other. Through interpersonal stimulation and response the biological individual is slowly changed into a human being or personality. The infant's cry of distress, for example, is behavior which evokes in the mother a response that brings a pleasant relief, say, from hunger tensions in the child. The child's resulting behavior in turn becomes a social stimulus to still another response, say, picking him up and gently caressing him. The process may go on back and forth, each act in the total process suggesting or bringing out still another act. Social interaction is reciprocal action, action in which each individual in the process anticipates and adjusts himself to the oncoming act of the other.

Social interaction is not, however, action directed reciprocally only from one person to another. It is also *self-reaction*, interaction with oneself. The child not only stimulates others but also himself. This is clearly in evidence when the child's vocal gestures have an effect on himself similar to their effect upon others. The child talks to himself, as in play, and the sound of his voice and the meaning of his vocal gestures come to have the same effect upon himself that they have upon others. He responds to his own stimuli and affects his own behavior in a manner similar to that in which others respond to and affect his actions. G. H. Mead, the most radical and consistent exponent of the role of interaction in social psychology, describes the process, with particular reference to the rise of the self, as follows: "The self arises in conduct when the individual . . . assumes the attitude or uses the gesture which another individual would use and responds to it himself. The child gradually becomes a social being in his own experience, and he acts toward himself in a manner analogous to that in which he acts toward others."<sup>51</sup> Social interaction, even in its simplest form, is a highly complex psychological process. It is also normally a highly organized or integrated

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<sup>51</sup> G. H. Mead, "A Behavioristic Account of the Significant Symbol," *J. Philos.*, 19 (1922), 160. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



process. The various aspects of social interaction which we shall examine in this section are (1) communication, (2) anticipation, (3) role-perception, and (4) significant symbolization.

*Communication.* The human infant, because of his dependence upon others for the satisfaction of his fundamental needs, performs such elementary activities as crying, whining, and fretting. In these acts he hears his own voice, to which he responds by vocalizations, an imitation of what he thus hears. At the same time that this crude vocalization is going on, the mother or other person ministering to his needs also makes a variety of sounds. The child repeats these sounds and by a process of conditioning learns to associate them with the activities engaged in by that other individual. In time he associates his own sounds with the objects and activities around him even though the mother no longer makes the sounds in his presence. The child has connected in his own experience the sound of his voice and the vocalizations of his sensations and feelings with the objects and persons in his immediate environment. He is now able to *communicate* his wishes. A cry now *means* the bottle, the breast, or the mother's comforting caress. The sound now is associated with the oncoming response of the other individual.

The child learns the meanings of the sounds in the stimulus-response activity going on between himself and his mother in the same manner as he learns many other early activities, namely, by a process of social conditioning. As he matures the child soon learns that conformity to the verbal stimuli of those around him leads to various rewards and he comes to behave in accordance with the verbal expectations of others.

In infancy and early childhood communication is socially undifferentiated. The sounds which he hears his mother making and her behavior toward him are not altogether "out there" but inside his own response system. He treats the outer world as if it were a part of himself. His mother and her behavior with reference to him are not altogether objective phenomena; they are a part of himself. His early communicative activities are thus *introjective*; they fuse with the behavior of others, or incorporate the not-self into the self, as Mead described the situation. Introjection is the beginning of sympathy, of understanding the self of another.

*Anticipation.* In the above analysis the factor of anticipation is already in evidence. In the example of the interaction of the child with his mother numerous anticipatory reactions are built up in the former. When he cries he "expects" the mother to come to him. His crying becomes "significant" to him in the sense that, while his mother is performing an accommodative act toward him, such as presenting her breast,



he is meanwhile adjusting his behavior toward her in such a manner as to lead to the satisfaction of his wants. Anticipation on the child's part is thus another factor in the completion of a social act. The child who cannot learn to anticipate the oncoming act of another cannot learn to modify his behavior in accordance with the other's expectation and so fails to become progressively and fully socialized.

While this process in the early stages of the infant's development goes on largely on a perceptual level, it gradually becomes more covert and abstract, first in the form of memory and later in the form of imagination and thought. The child has the attitude of expectancy not simply as the result of the repetition of an act, but as a consequence of an elaborate social reaction which is taking place. For this reason simple conditioning of the reflexological order is inadequate to account for it. The social process taking place is one of *identification*. The child's response to his mother's act is bound up with that act; it is, indeed, a part of it. Kimball Young describes this process simply and clearly. He writes:

Just as the mother interprets the infant's cries, manual gestures, and bodily tensions as evidence that he wishes to be fed, so his own gestures take on significance because they lead to his taking her breast and ingesting her milk. He cannot get his reward, in fact, unless he adjust his own acts to hers. He learns to control or direct his acts in terms of what another expects of him. That is, the first meaning of hunger and its satisfaction comes from his mother's actions toward him as well as from his toward her.<sup>52</sup>

*Role-perception.* Philosophers and psychologists have for centuries been trying to determine the basic differences between man and the lower animals. The answers have been numerous: man, in contrast to animals, has a soul, mind, intelligence, or reason. From the standpoint of social interactionism, however, there is still another and more crucial answer. The human individual differs from his nearest animal ancestors because he can view himself through another person's eyes, because he can vicariously experience the attitudes and acts of another person. *Man is a role-taking animal.* Personality is a way of behaving which we attribute to others because we perceive it in ourselves, because we can imagine ourselves feeling, thinking, and doing what others are feeling, thinking, and doing. Behavior is thus interpreted in terms of social interaction, role-perception, or the kinds of experiences which an individual has

<sup>52</sup> Kimball Young, *Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1944), p. 134. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



by virtue of participating in close personal relationships with other members of his group. It is this assumption of another's role in oneself that gives meaning to one's own behavior. Hence, an important aspect of personality is that of taking the role of another toward an object, situation, or experience. Animals, mentally defective persons, and psychotic individuals are deficient in the capacity of perceiving their roles in their interaction with others.

Role-acting is closely bound up with the anticipation of another's reactions. The person in whom this social skill is well-developed can quickly grasp another's point of view. Highly rigid personalities are those with a poverty of perspectives who shift only with great difficulty, or not at all, to another role. Thus, when confronted by emergencies or crises they are unable to shift their perspectives but persist in the same mode of reaction. Under such circumstances the overcoming of obstacles or the solution of problems becomes practically impossible. What we call a person's insight is in considerable part made possible by this skill in perceiving his roles, in shifting perspectives in new situations.

Communication, with which we began this discussion of social interaction, becomes progressively a more effective technique of adjustment as it develops into a medium of role-acting. By playing the role of his mother or father, a child reproduces his parent's actions, incorporates them into his behavior, and makes them his own. In this manner he comes to speak and act as they do. As his area of participation expands, he learns to play still other roles and to take on a still larger number of perspectives. He learns to behave as other people in his culture behave.

*Significant symbolization.* As time passes, the child reaches a level of considerable complexity in playing his roles in interaction with others. Meanwhile, he is slowly acquiring a conventionalized language, and therefore the capacity of symbolizing persons, objects, and events in their absence. For his earlier overt vocalizations he is now substituting symbolic, and for the most part covert, responses. As an aid to clarification it will be helpful to distinguish between sign and symbol, or between sign-response and symbol-response.

A sign is something to which we react directly. A *sign-response*, accordingly, is an undelayed, mechanical, and noncognitive or unconditioned reaction. Thus, the infant's direct response to the breast or the bottle is a sign-response. There is no delay period in which an assessment of the situation takes place. Sign-responses make up a very large part of the reactions by means of which the organism maintains its balance and assures its survival. The early process of communication in the infant consists largely



of such sign-responses. Social interaction in this period of his development is held at a minimum, for there is a poverty of symbol-responses.<sup>53</sup>

A symbol is a *substitute* for something, something to which we react indirectly. There is a delay period involved in *symbol-response* during which reflection and a sizing-up of the situation take place. Symbol-response is a process; it involves a period during which thinking, reflection, and self-reflection go on; it is largely cognitive or reflective behavior. The sign in this case takes on a conscious or self-conscious meaning. As Mead would say, the sign becomes a "significant symbol." The unique characteristic of the significant symbol is that it is used by man to stimulate himself. Symbol-reaction is self-stimulation. From all that we know of animal behavior, there is no evidence that it uses significant symbols. An animal does not stimulate itself nor respond to its self-stimulation. A sign becomes a significant symbol when it has the same effect on the individual making it that it has on the individual for whom it is intended. The functioning of this type of symbolic interaction between two persons, or between a person and himself, is true social communication, or language. The act of addressing another person is the act of addressing oneself. We not only respond to another individual, but we use the apprehended stimulus from another by responding to it ourselves.

In trying to make this phase of the process of social interaction clear, Mead compares the symbolic behavior of man with the sign behavior of the dog. The dog when spoken to only stands on his hind legs and walks, for the words are signals, but not significant symbols. He cannot stimulate himself in the same manner that he is stimulated by others. Unlike man, the dog cannot condition his own reflexes. It is characteristic of significant symbolization, of human speech, that this process of symbolic self-conditioning is going on all the time.<sup>54</sup>

## Cultural Conditioning

In our analysis of the role of social interaction in personality patterning we called attention to the fact that personality is in part a product of the kinds of experiences which an individual has by virtue of

<sup>53</sup> See J. F. Markey, *The Symbolic Process and Its Integration in Children* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928), pp. 106-116; Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-189. Sign response is by no means confined to the behavior of children; on the contrary, much of adult behavior is to some extent sign-response behavior. This is clearly seen in the control of adult behavior by means of commercial advertising, political propaganda, organized prejudice, and the like.

<sup>54</sup> Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 108.



participating in close personal relationships with other members of his group, especially the primary group. This identification of members of the group with one another, this concern of each for the other, calls for an explanation. Important as this close participation is, powerful as the psychological structure of the group may be in conditioning behavior, it alone is insufficient to account for the social character of man. The ability to play another person's role, which is so crucial a factor in the process of social interaction, does not go far enough, for role-acting is significantly conditioned by the cultural similarity of two people. Generally speaking, the greater the cultural disparity that obtains between two people, the fewer are their symbolic interactions and the greater the social distance between them. While basic psychological factors, such as the need for protection and security, and elemental physiological drives, such as hunger and sex, may give rise to elementary social interactions between them, these interactions would be insufficient to shape significantly the course of personality development in each. Man does not merely interact with others in a group, but also with the group's content or social heritage. He lives in a world of folkways, mores, and institutions. The common ground upon which his interactions with others are established is culture. Culture, accordingly, is an important matrix of personality and behavior.

**The Meaning of Culture.** In social anthropology *culture* is not used in its narrow meaning of education or refinement. It carries no implication of prestige. Culture is essentially the way of life of a people. More concretely, the term refers to the more or less organized totality of ideas, artifacts, and ways of doing things which are shared in common by members of a particular society. The term *shared* in this connection must be understood, not in a moral or economic, but in a social-psychological, sense. It means that the ways of doing things are common to two or more members of a group, that they respond in a similar manner to the prevailing customs of society.

**Culture and society.** It is customary in anthropology to distinguish between culture and society. While the two are not in fact separate phenomena, the distinction is not a mere quibble. One is a counterpart of the other. A culture, as we saw, is a way of life. A way of life, however, is always a characteristic of a *people*; it does not exist by itself. The totality of people who practice a certain way of life is a society. Briefly, "*a society is composed of people; the way they behave is their culture.*"<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 29. Italics in the original.



There is perhaps no truer mark of man than his cultural heritage. Other animals, notably such social organisms as bees and ants, have societies, but only man has a culture. There is an important distinction between the physiological behavior of a social animal and the cultural behavior of man. The behavior patterns of the former are largely biologically inherited, whereas the cultural behavior of man is socially acquired. Man's culturally induced behavior is cumulative and almost infinitely rich in novelty, in contrast to the stereotyped and unproductive character of animal learning. Culturally determined learning in human beings calls for a social-psychological, rather than a hereditary-biological, explanation.<sup>50</sup> Thus, while both man and many lower biological forms are social animals, only man has a cultural heritage, a tool so sharp and versatile that he has been able to use it to control and transform his environment to his own uses.

*The ethos.* In defining culture as the organized totality of ideas, artifacts, and ways of doing things, we fail to bring into clear focus a significant fact about culture, its very flavor, so to speak. Every culture has its distinctive *ethos*, or system of values and ideals, which gives to that culture its essential and at the same time pervasive quality. The central idea of the *ethos* of a culture is that out of an infinite variety of possible cultural configurations every society selects some and rejects others. Thus, contemporary American society makes monetary values fundamental to almost every phase of human endeavor, while the Zuñi Indians are practically oblivious to these values. Hindu society places great importance upon "mystical" experience, such as the attainment of Nirvana, while Kwakiutl society aims at violent competitiveness in festive ceremonies as a means to the attainment of social prestige.

These distinctions refer to differences in the essential qualities or attributes of a culture, but they do not impute to culture a mind or will of its own. They denote the fact that the majority of people in a culture tend to live in accordance with these qualities or values and that their behavior is significantly controlled by them. Every individual in a culture is expected to behave toward the others in a prescribed way; and by virtue of early conditioning along required lines, most people in a society will behave in the manner expected. The prevailing bonds which in this way integrate people to live in accordance with an implicit value system constitute the *ethos*.

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<sup>50</sup> For an interesting and cogent discussion of this problem, the student is urged to consult the following references: S. Zuckerman, *The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932); T. C. Schneirla, "Problems in the Biopsychology of Social Organization," *J. Abn. & Soc. Psychol.*, 41 (1946), 385-402.



For social psychology the ethos has important implications, since the ethos gives rise to the basic personality structure of individuals in a society. Thus, if the American is competitive, generous, and a lover of the baseball game, these traits of his personality reflect some of the dominant qualities of the American ethos that conditioned and shaped him in his early life. If the German values martial glory, military bands, and has a passion for order, these traits are deeply embedded in his response system because these qualities constitute the German ethos. A knowledge of the ethos offers the student of social psychology another conceptual tool for the study of human behavior.

*Enculturation.*<sup>57</sup> Behavioristic psychology did general psychology an important service when it applied the neurophysiologist's concept of the conditioned reflex to the study of human behavior. Traditional behaviorism offered too narrow an interpretation of the conditioning process as a simple and mechanical phenomenon. The conditioned response hypothesis of J. B. Watson and other early behaviorists is too one-sided physiologically to account for the inordinate complexity and variety of human behavior. If we expand the hypothesis in such a manner as not to exclude consciousness, or the type of symbolic behavior which we have discussed, so that the stimulus-response process is itself viewed as a configuration instead of atomistically, then behaviorism should find ready acceptance by all social psychologists.<sup>58</sup>

The concept of conditioning in the configurational, nonmechanistic sense has important applications in social psychology. Just as a physiological reflex may be conditioned by repetitive external stimuli, so an individual's social behavior may be conditioned by the cultural heritage. This process may be called *cultural conditioning*, or *enculturation*. A culturally conditioned response is a complex set of reactions built up in the individual through frequent interaction with the ethos or cultural values of a specific group. To distinguish this response from the conditioned response of the

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<sup>57</sup> This term is used by Herskovits to describe the process of cultural conditioning. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 39ff.

<sup>58</sup> It should be added that there are no important behaviorists of the Watsonian type today. The theories and researches of such present-day behaviorists as Hull, Tolman, and Guthrie can be readily incorporated into the conceptual framework of this book. Hull, for instance, has not been afraid to introduce the *Gestalt* ("stimulus configuration") as playing an important part in the process of conditioning. For crucial experimental evidence of the failure of orthodox behaviorism to account for conscious and complex learning, see Z. Y. Kuo, "The Genesis of the Cat's Response to the Rat," *J. Compar. Psychol.*, 11 (1930), 1-30.



reflexologist, we may designate the reaction growing out of cultural conditioning by the term *socialized response*.

The process of cultural conditioning, or enculturation, prepares the individual to find his way in his culture, adjust himself to its demands, and gain skill in his relations with others. By the time an individual reaches adulthood he has been so thoroughly conditioned to live in accordance with the demands and expectations of his group that he lives much of his life almost automatically. The degree of psychic expenditure in the process of adjustment will, of course, be affected by the relative stability of the culture in which he lives. In a highly mobile and fast-changing culture, readjustments and new forms of behavior will be required continually, until, as when the individual lives in American society, readjustment and reorientation themselves become the norm. For this reason modern man is able on the whole to take in his stride the reorientations required by artifacts ranging from television to the atomic bomb.<sup>59</sup>

The concept of cultural conditioning, of enculturation, helps us to relate the individual to his culture and so serves as a means for demonstrating the organismic nature of man-in-his-environment. Neither man nor culture is a thing apart. The very definition of culture as the organized ways of doing things calls attention to the psychological nature of its being, for culture is a configuration of the behavior of the individuals who make up the society through which culture is expressed. The distorted perspective on human behavior which has characterized some psychological approaches, notably the psychobiological and the instinctivist, has been in large part due to their differentiation of the individual from his culture. Such fundamental psychological processes as motivation, goal-directed behavior, and social adjustment can no more be isolated from the culture in which they emerge and operate than they can be divorced from the human individual who strives, seeks ends, and accommodates himself to his fellow men.

## Conclusion

We have been concerned in this chapter with the problem of scientific method in social psychology. We have considered the methods of investigation adopted by social psychologists in their study of human behavior.

The second part of the chapter has dealt with the framework upon which our study of human behavior is based: the interrelation of the biological heritage,

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<sup>59</sup> To some readers this analysis may be too optimistic. They will point to the increase of personal maladjustments in the modern world, and attribute them to the rapid pace of contemporary life. This is no doubt the fate of an increasing number of individuals, but the condition does not invalidate our essential argument.



social interaction, and cultural conditioning. The biological heritage of the individual limits the possible influence of environmental factors; by social interaction the behavior of one individual is modified by the behavior of others; the cultural heritage of the individual determines to a great extent his social behavior.

Man's culture is of the greatest importance to the social psychologist. The study of the impact of culture upon the individual develops in the social psychologist a profound awareness of both the complexity and the flexibility—yes, even the creativeness—of the human individual. Beyond the biological limit imposed upon the individual by his constitutional and hereditary organization, there is a wide expanse of behavior patterns which is conditioned largely by man's culture. The possibilities of social learning, of conditioning and reconditioning, of creating and recreating human adjustments, seem well-nigh endless. If culture yields opportunity for individualization, for differences from society to society, then the human individual is not wholly a passive agent upon whom enculturation is exercised. Man creates his own culture, and in creating his culture he is transforming himself.

In view of such observations as the foregoing the social psychologist must face the challenge implicit in them. He dare no longer ignore the fact that an organismic view of human activities requires him to make explicit their cultural ingredients. Whether the psychologist studies mind, personality, the self, or just plain "human nature," he must recognize that each is affected in significant ways by the culture in which it functions.<sup>60</sup>

There is, finally, one more reason for the importance of culture to the social psychologist. Culture is personality objectified; personality is culture encapsulated in a biological organism. This relationship is most clearly evident in the connection between attitudes and values. Attitudes are the psychological counterparts of cultural values; they are ways of viewing and manipulating the customs and institutions of a society. Values, on the other hand, are social objects, or the customs and institutions which the individual finds it necessary to adapt to and manipulate. While the social psychologist's interest is in attitudes, he cannot fully understand their development and effective functioning outside the dominant values, or institutional complex, of a given society.

<sup>60</sup> Conversely it is the business of the anthropologist to become increasingly sensitive to the psychological aspects of culture. May we quickly add, however, that it is to the lasting credit of most anthropologists that they early recognized the psychological elements in culture, even though they did not until recently translate certain cultural into psychological phenomena. The concept of the "psychic unity of mankind," however untenable it may be, is an early expression of the anthropologist's position. Tylor in England and Bastian in Germany were the classic exponents of this view. For the earliest formulations of this relationship see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London: John Murray, 1871); Adolf Bastian, *Ethnische Elementargedanke in der Lehre von Menschen* (Berlin: E. Felber, 1895).

Kroeber recognizes the relationship with fine discernment. See A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, new ed. rev. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), p. 574.







PART TWO :

## Social Interaction

THE SOCIAL MATRIX  
OF BEHAVIOR





## CHAPTER 3 :

# Language and Behavior

MAN IS A TALKING ANIMAL. Without his ability to talk, both man and his society would be significantly different from what they are. This is an important fact to remember as we study human behavior in its social relationships.

The *capacity* of speaking is inherent only in man. We have no evidence of its existence in other animals. The claim sometimes made that the anthropoid apes have this capacity is based on a confusion. Although apes do express their affective states by means of sound utterances, bodily movements, and facial gestures, they do not have the capacity of speech as we know it. Moreover, in some cases of apparent communication there is reason for believing that man is injecting, by a process of sympathy, his own impulses into the behavior of animals.

While the capacity for speaking is inherent in man, a part of his bio-



logical heritage, *language as a system of sounds and symbols for communicating his affective and cognitive experiences is wholly acquired. Language is a social product, a thing of invention and culture.* It rests on an organic basis but it develops into a superorganic product.

Language is important in the study of social psychology for several reasons. First of all, it is the basic medium of interaction without which human social life as we understand it could not have originated and without which social participation above a biological level could not be carried on. In the second place, it is the sole carrier of culture from one generation to the next, the transmitting mechanism of human ideas and forms of behavior. In the third place, language makes possible a common set of meanings, common definitions by which men can regulate their lives. Finally, language plays an important role in the growth of the child from a biological animal to a socialized animal, or a human being. Apart from language, in fine, there can be no significant social and cultural life, no traditions, no folkways, no art and science, none of the many exquisite things that have set man apart from all other animals.

## The Roots of Language

Philosophy and the social sciences, particularly anthropology and psychology, have developed many theories on the origin of language.<sup>1</sup> Wundt traced the origin of language to gesticulation. The child, he says, spontaneously uses gestures to communicate his wants to others. Bodily movements, such as grimacing and pointing, are universally understood when they occur between men who do not possess a common language. Even among lower animals they serve as techniques for controlling the behavior of other creatures. Language from this point of view is an expression of emotion; for gestures are overt manifestations of emotional states.<sup>2</sup>

The sound-imitation theory of Herder argues that language grew out of the practical need of man to designate objects of his experience. To this end man uses sounds in imitation of those of nature. This theory is based upon the observation that the vocabularies of infants and primitive people

<sup>1</sup> For a brief exposition of the theories of the origin of language, see Otto Klineberg, *Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1940), chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology*, trans. by E. L. Schaub (London: Allen and Unwin, 1928), chap. i. Wundt, it should be added, used the term *gesture* to refer to any form of nonverbal symbolic behavior.



abound in onomatopoeic words, words imitating such sounds as the singing of birds, the growling of dogs, or the roaring of the wind.<sup>3</sup>

Another theory of the origin of human speech is that of Noiré. According to this writer, language had its inception in sense impressions—in the effect of objects on the sensory receptors—and in the capacity of man to transmit these impressions to others. This *communication* took place, first, in the form of emotional gestures and, second and much later, in the form of verbal symbols. Thus, acts or gestures, according to Noiré, antecede verbal symbols; verbal symbols are substitutes for muscular action.<sup>4</sup>

Noiré's view gains considerable support from philology and social psychology. It is now generally recognized that laryngeal sounds preceded articulate speech in the evolution of man. Cries of anger or fear, for example, are used by lower animals as well as by man to control the responses of others. The control of others by laryngeal sounds, the adaptation of one individual to another by means of them, was the earliest stage in the development of language. Early man, like the present-day infant, had the capacity for laryngeal articulation. Through the exercise of this capacity he was able to produce random syllables. He thus came to produce in himself a variety of auditory-vocal responses through hearing them produced in others. This articulation may originally have been only a happy accident; but once the process was initiated, man was able to duplicate the articulated syllables with ever-increasing frequency and accuracy. F. H. Allport states the matter very clearly. He writes:

The ear-vocal reflex of the spoken syllable would be . . . conditioned in the speaker by the sight of the object; and, what is equally important, it would be evoked in another individual and similarly conditioned. Here then we have the basis for the use of the same word-sign or name by two or more persons, the essence, in other words, of language itself. Success in communicating and controlling one's fellows with reference to the object would serve to fixate this conditioned ear-vocal reflex as a permanent habit. With the advancement of human intelligence mankind probably learned to profit by this accidental discovery and, grasping the significance of the principle involved, began to apply it, at first unconsciously and then more or less deliberately, in the coining and adoption of new word-signs . . . If

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<sup>3</sup> J. G. Herder, *Abhandlung Über den Ursprung der Sprache*, in *Herder's Sämmtliche Werke* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1877-1913), Vol. V.

See further, F. Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language* (New York: Scribner, 1862).

<sup>4</sup> L. Noiré, *The Origin and Philosophy of Language* (Chicago: Open Ct., 1917), pp. 73-74.



the foregoing theory is correct, social stimulation and response lie at the very root of language. . . .<sup>5</sup>

The significance of the foregoing analysis lies in its reference to circular ear-vocal responses and in its specific emphasis on the place of social control as important factors in the origin of language. It is but a small step, albeit a crucial one, from this theory to a more refined social-psychological explanation of human language which we shall consider next.

A plausible and illuminating theory of the origin of human speech is that of G. H. Mead. While it stems from Noiré's theory in its emphasis on speech as a substitute for muscle movement, and is similar to Wundt's view in its use of the concept of gesture, Mead's analysis is a distinct advance over the views of his predecessors.

Mead begins his discussion of language with an analysis of the gesture. As a method of presenting the gesture, he uses the illustration of a dog fight. Each dog's behavior is determined by what the other dog is beginning to do, so that change in behavior takes place in each. The readiness of one dog to attack the other becomes a stimulus to the latter to change his own position with reference to the first dog. No sooner has he done this than the change of position of the second dog becomes the occasion for a change of position of the first. This "conversation of gestures" may continue for some time without an actual combat taking place. The significant fact about this conversation of gestures is that it is a form of communication. The gestures themselves are symbols; they induce each animal to act in appropriate ways with reference to the other.<sup>6</sup>

This communication through gestures is not, however, language, for it does not take place between consciously communicating selves. Language is a form of communication in which the gestures become *significant* symbols. In significant symbolic communication the individual must not only be able to respond to another but must be able to interpret the meaning of his own gestures. In this process the individual is acting on a plane of *conscious* meaning. The conversation of gestures has passed to the level of the *significant symbol*, away from unconscious communication. Language is thus a conscious process, a *mode of communication* between individuals

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<sup>5</sup> F. H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), pp. 194-195. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

<sup>6</sup> G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 42f.



each of whom is conscious of what he is doing. "We are conscious," Mead says, "when what we are going to do is controlling what we are doing."<sup>7</sup>

### Language Development in The Child

For the most part, we can only theorize about the origin of speech. However, in considering the development of language in the child, we touch on more concrete and practical aspects of the subject. At the same time the validity of some of the theoretical interpretations given above can be put to an empirical test.

Earlier textbooks in social psychology devoted considerable space to discussions of the "stages" of language development in the child.<sup>8</sup> The subject is occasionally discussed in more recent textbooks.<sup>9</sup> These stages are variously four or five in number. They are (1) the prelinguistic stage, including the birth cry of the baby; (2) the babbling stage, the period of crowing and cooing; (3) the sound-imitation stage, in which the infant repeats the same sound over and over; (4) the stage of verbal understanding, or the period when the child knows many words but normally does not use them; and (5) the stage of verbal utterance, when the child uses the words he has already learned.

Most present-day social psychologists show little interest in these stages of development. Rather, they are studying the child's use of the word-sentence.<sup>10</sup> It has long been assumed that the child learns separate words first, and later learns to string them together into meaningful sentences. Parents observe that the child, in imitation of their own use of words, gradually uses words in combination to construct phrases and sentences. He is a rare parent who notes that the child is uttering rudimentary sentences in the

<sup>7</sup> G. H. Mead, "The Genesis of the Self and Social Control," *Internat. J. Ethics*, 35 (1924), 251-277.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, K. Young, *Social Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1930), pp. 213-217. See also the same author's *Personality and Problems of Adjustment* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), pp. 145-155.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, S. S. Sargent, *Social Psychology* (New York: Ronald, 1950), pp. 228-229; K. Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, 2nd edition (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), pp. 133-143.

<sup>10</sup> W. Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood up to the Sixth Year of Age*, trans. by Anna Barwell (New York: Holt, 1924); Grace A. de Laguna, *Speech: Its Function and Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), pp. 86ff. De Laguna calls it a "sentence-word."



form of single words before he puts them together into formal sentences. Thus, the word *Mama* does not merely designate a certain person in the child's experience, but connotes different activities associated with her. It may mean "Mama, come here!" "Mama, I'm hungry," etc. The word *ball* does not denote only a certain bouncing object but may also be used by the child to demand possession of the object, or to have it thrown on the floor. The meaning in each case is more than the word denotes; the word can function as a sentence without the aid of additional words. A child's word is thus both denotative and connotative; it designates not only an object but properties, attitudes, and activities associated with it in the child's experience. Its meaning is, accordingly, largely dependent upon the context with which it has become associated in the child's life. "In order to understand what the baby is saying," writes De Laguna, "you must see what the baby is doing. The simple sentence-word is a complete proclamation or command or question, because the speech in which it occurs is so closely bound up with the attitude of response to his immediate surroundings."<sup>11</sup>

The initial period in the growth of a child's language is thus not an additive process but a configurational whole. The ability of the child to differentiate language into separate verbal functions develops only gradually.<sup>12</sup>

**The Child's Vocabulary.** As the process of differentiation proceeds, the child's vocabulary rapidly increases. This increase is particularly striking during the second year of a child's growth. One study has shown an increase from 3 words in the first year to 272 words in the second.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in a study of 140 children McCarthy found that the average number of words used by a child increased from 20 words at 18 months to 230 at 54 months.<sup>14</sup> According to the investigation by Smith, by the age of six the child has learned over 2,500 words. The largest relative growth of vocabulary takes place during the first four years; thereafter, the vocabulary increases more slowly. It is probably true, as Krout points out, that as the child's language capacity develops he acquires words at

<sup>11</sup> De Laguna, *ibid.*, p. 91. See further, Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, p. 155; 2nd edition, p. 143.

<sup>12</sup> See K. Koffka, *The Growth of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924); O. Jespersen, *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (New York: Holt, 1922).

<sup>13</sup> M. E. Smith, *An Investigation of the Development of the Sentence and the Extent of Vocabulary in Young Children* (Univ. Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, 1926, No. 5).

<sup>14</sup> D. McCarthy, *The Language Development of the Pre-School Child* (Univ. Minn. Inst. Child Welf. Monogr., 1930, No. 4).



the rate of about 600 per year until he reaches what may be called a "saturation point."<sup>15</sup>

The growth of the child's vocabulary during the first and second year is primarily in verbal recognition or verbal understanding. He understands many words, as indicated by his own gestures, but he is still unable to articulate verbal responses to them. The level of verbal utterance is achieved slowly. It develops when a word has the same effect on the child saying it that it has on those to whom he is speaking. His speech is moving away from an egocentric to a socialized orientation. Piaget concludes from his study of Swiss children that "true" social speech seldom appears before the seventh year; for while inter-stimulation-and-response takes place earlier, social collaboration in speech, conversation in which words are used from the point of view of the person addressed, develops relatively late. Before this period much of the child's verbal activity consists of repetitious monologue; he ignores the point of view of others, and talks mostly to please himself.<sup>16</sup> Piaget writes:

The most striking aspect of explanations between one child and another . . . is constituted by what may be called the *ego-centric character* of childish style . . . Now we have seen that the child of 6 to 7 still talks to a great extent for himself alone, without trying to gain the attention of his hearer. Thus a portion of the child's language is still ego-centric. When, moreover, the language becomes socialized, the process at first only touches the factual products of thought, *i.e.*, in talking to each other children avoid the use of causal and logical relations (because, etc.), such as are used in all "genuine argument" or in "collaboration in abstract thought." Before the age of 7 or 8 these two kinds of relations are therefore still unexpressed, or rather, still strictly individual. Observation shows that up till the age of about 7 or 8, the child, even when he can think of them himself, does not spontaneously give explanations or demonstrations to his equals, because his language is still saturated with ego-centrism.<sup>17</sup>

The foregoing conclusion is supported, with reservations, by investigations into the language process in American children. Rugg, Krueger, and Sondergaard, in their study of the language of kindergarten children, found that almost half of the remarks were self-centered in character.<sup>18</sup> McCarthy

<sup>15</sup> M. H. Krout, *Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1942), p. 329.

<sup>16</sup> J. Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child*, trans. by M. Warden (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926), pp. 99ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

<sup>18</sup> H. Rugg, L. Krueger, and A. Sondergaard, "A Study of Language in Kindergarten Children," *J. Educ. Psychol.*, 20 (1929), 1-18.



has found an additional stage, an intermediate stage, in American children. In this stage the child uses socially meaningful phrases but in a mechanical and memorized manner. A typical example is the expression "bye-bye," which, though socially oriented, is neither completely socialized nor wholly egocentric.<sup>19</sup> In one study McCarthy found that the child's use of words varied with the individual addressed. Egocentric speech abounded when the child spoke to other children, but a more socialized form of speech took place when he talked to adults.<sup>20</sup>

**The Growth of the Sentence in the Child's Language.** As we have pointed out, the child begins his language development with an implicit sentence, or sentence-word, rather than with single words. The question now naturally arises: How does the single-term sentence develop into an ordered structure of functionally related parts?

In his interactions with others the child gradually learns that his sentence words fail to make him understood. They therefore fail him in the most crucial area of his daily experience, the area of the control of others. For this reason he gradually drops his unique language and adopts that understood by others. Language, social-psychologically speaking, is a technique of social control, and words and combination of words that fail to elicit anticipated responses in others are useless. Sounds as well as words are discarded for this reason. By the fourth month an infant is able to produce all the sounds found in any language. But unless the sounds are used in the language of his environment, they are gradually dropped and forgotten. Thus an American child, though capable of making the guttural and umlaut sounds of the German language, does not need them, and may even have great difficulty in reproducing them when he is an adult.

The transition from the word-sentence to the complete sentence marks an exceedingly important period in the linguistic growth of the human individual. While the primary function of all speech, whether it be the rudimentary word-sentence or the highly formalized explicit sentence, is the control of behavior, the characteristic mark of the complete sentence is its *interlocutory* nature. It is this mark that makes language truly social, in Piaget's sense, for now the control of behavior takes place on the level of social intercourse, or *conversation*. Social language is coordinative and adaptive rather than self-assertive and imperative. As such it is a funda-

<sup>19</sup> D. McCarthy, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> D. McCarthy, "A Comparison of Children's Language in Different Situations," *J. Genet. Psychol.*, 36 (1929), 583-591.



mental element in all concerted action. It makes possible the give and take which makes group life truly social.

### Language and Thought

The relation between language and thought is a recurrent problem in social psychology. Although this problem is too vast and elusive to be adequately treated in these pages, it is necessary to trace at least in a general way the relation between thought and symbols, for social behavior cannot be sufficiently understood without it.

The psychology of language has long suffered from the baneful influence of Max Müller. Nowhere is this more true than in his highly biased, even mystical, analysis of the relation between language and thought. Language and thought, according to him, arise together in man; one is impossible without the other. Since the animals below man have no language they cannot think; and conversely, being unable to think, they cannot talk.<sup>21</sup> Research has shown, to be sure, that man does not develop speech outside a social group; but it has also shown that animals have the capacity for thought.

In this connection, the Kelloggs' experiment with a chimpanzee who reasoned and acted more intelligently during the first year and a half than their own child comes readily to mind.<sup>22</sup> Gua, a two-and-one-half-months-old chimpanzee, and Donald, the Kellogg's five-months-old son, were trained to perform similar acts and were tested continuously throughout the period of the experiment. The experiment was terminated when Gua was sixteen and one-half months and Donald was nineteen months old. The differences between the two during the first year were consistently in favor of the chimpanzee in both physical and mental development. Her memory and learning, her "reasoning" capacity, were superior to those of the human child. After the first year, however, the child advanced more rapidly than the chimpanzee.

Verlaine and his associates carried on some experiments with Coco, a monkey, which confirm that animals have the capacity for thought. Coco was able to perform completion tests at the 5-7 year human level, classify plants and animals, identify birds, etc. Furthermore, he quickly understood the design of the experiments in which he participated and per-

<sup>21</sup> Max Müller, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> W. N. and L. A. Kellogg, *The Ape and the Child* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933).



formed his work in them without difficulty.<sup>23</sup> Verlaine's conclusion is that the thought processes of the monkey are the same as those of man, and that the significant difference lies in the fact that man thinks *more* than the monkey.<sup>24</sup>

Thus research supports our claim that thinking may go on in the absence of the type of symbolic response we designate as language, a claim which is now generally supported by social psychologists. Yet it does not follow that language and thought are completely separate processes. On the contrary, they are, certainly in the more subtle and refined area of human symbolic behavior, interdependent. The fallacy in the views of Müller and his followers lay not in their emphasis on the dependence of thought upon language, but in their belief that since lower animals do not have a language they are incapable of thinking.<sup>25</sup>

**The Role of Concepts.** The relation between thought and language is nowhere more clearly evident than in man's use of concepts. A concept is fundamentally a generalization of perceptions. Thus, the word *ball* is not a single perception but a concept, a stimulus pattern that encompasses a large variety of single experiences. When combined with other concepts it makes up the flow of speech wherein the various concepts are placed into mutual relations with one another.<sup>26</sup> A word is thus a concept, a symbolic representation. Language is a substitute for bodily responses to the environment in the sense that the signal or cue for adjustment is not present at the time of the response.<sup>27</sup> Thus, if in the absence of the child's ball he utters the word *ball* and the mother brings it to him, the word serves as a symbolic substitute for the ball. The substituted word now provides the child with two important forms of mastery: (1) a technique

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<sup>23</sup> The experiments are reported by Verlaine and his collaborators in over a dozen articles in a variety of Belgian journals. A brief but excellent review of these experiments is presented in K. Lashley, "Studies of Simian Intelligence from the University of Liège," *Psychol. Bull.*, 37 (1940), 237-248.

<sup>24</sup> L. Verlaine and P. Gallis, "L'Intelligence des Singes Inférieurs," *Mém. Soc. Sci. Liège*, 17 (1932), 1-48.

<sup>25</sup> Confronted by the fact that thinking has been reported without pre-existent words, Müller indulges in some interesting special pleading to save his theory. Such words, he believes, as do not seem to be bearers of thoughts are words that are not understood by others, and these, he argues, do not properly constitute a language. See his *Lectures on the Science of Language*.

<sup>26</sup> E. Sapir, *Language, An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921), p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> See C. T. Morgan, *Physiological Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943), p. 543.



for controlling the objects in his environment, and (2) the power of generalization or abstraction. The child's words refer to *classes* of objects rather than to a single object. The very essence of concepts, and consequently of language, is their denotation of more than a single object.

The conceptual nature of language is most clearly discernible in abstract thought, particularly in the language of science and philosophy. The less developed the language the fewer are the abstractions used by it and the finer are its discriminations between objects. The speech of the Klamath Indians, whose culture is comparatively low, has no single word for "run" but a different one for the running of every animal. Some languages have no single term for "brother" but different words for older and younger brother. The German language makes a distinction between the eating by a man and by an animal. The Arabs have about 6,000 terms associated with camel, such as milk camel, or riding camel.<sup>28</sup> Some people have no abstract term for "tree," and hence must indicate what kind of tree they are denoting, such as "oak tree," or "birch tree." The Eskimos, Boas points out, discriminate minutely between the different kinds of ice, such as "fresh water ice," or "salt water ice."<sup>29</sup>

The language of the Kwakiutl is remarkably precise, the Korzybski dream almost come true, as one student of language described it. Thus, the English declaration regarding a neighbor, "He is sick," is rendered in Kwakiutl by the statement, "That invisible man, near me, I am told, lies ill on his back on the floor of the absent house away from you."<sup>30</sup> It is impossible for a Kwakiutl Indian to convey his information in any other way, for the form which his sentence takes is determined by the symbolic and grammatical structure of the Kwakiutl language.

These differences in the use of concepts are not biologically determined. The group life of many peoples has never provided them with more general terms because their mode of life does not require them.

**Imagery and Thought.** The problem of the relation between imagery and thought is fundamentally the same as that of the relation between thought and language. Thought may take place without imagery, but frequently the two go together. Words alone, without the

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<sup>28</sup> W. I. Thomas, *Primitive Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937).

<sup>29</sup> F. Boas, *General Anthropology* (Boston: Heath, 1938), pp. 129f.

<sup>30</sup> The author is indebted for this example and for reference to its "Korzybskian quality" to Professor Stanley M. Sapon, of the Department of Romance Languages, Ohio State University. We shall consider Korzybski's contribution to language in a later section of this chapter.



presence of images, may carry a thought; and in the more abstract forms of thinking images may not only be entirely absent but their presence might serve as a positive hindrance. If by the term *image*, however, we mean an incipient perception, a quality of expectancy, then imagery may be said to play a significant role in human thinking. Expectancy in this sense means *imagination*, a symbolic process in which an absent stimulus may bring about a present response. Imagination is a very active process in most children during the preschool years. However, the socialization of the child diminishes his imaginative behavior. His uninhibited imagination gives way to symbolic manipulation, i.e., his thinking becomes more organized and directed. At the same time the child learns to cooperate with others and becomes more amenable to the educative process in the school and on the playground.

Although it is necessary for the child to proceed from imaginative behavior to thinking, we must recognize that the curtailment of the former has its dangers. While thus far we have only psychoanalytical evidence in support of this conclusion, it may well be that the curtailment of imaginative behavior reduces the possibility of resolving minor conflicts and increases the likelihood of the incidence of serious maladjustments.<sup>31</sup>

Jersild calls attention to the valuable functions of imaginative activity in the child. He writes:

Through his imagination, the child is able to carry on his (reasoning) on a lower level of concentration, so to speak; he is enabled to solve problems that he cannot so easily handle when dealing with realities, to overcome vicariously some of his limitations, to transcend the limitations of time and space, to bring the world more into line with his own desires, and to manipulate his environment with greater ease.<sup>32</sup>

It is not always easy to distinguish between this type of free imaginative activity and the organization of symbols in controlled thinking. In many instances imagination is an instrument for organizing and expressing individual interests; for the attribution of new values to old objects and experiences frequently leads to new discoveries and inventions. So conceived it is a valuable asset both to the individual and his society.

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<sup>31</sup> See Anna Freud, *Introduction to Psycho-Analysis for Teachers and Parents* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931); M. Klein, *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (New York: Norton, 1932).

<sup>32</sup> A. T. Jersild, *Child Psychology* (Copyright, 1944, by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York), p. 386. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



**The Place of Meaning in Language and Thought.** The relation between thought and language can be further clarified by a consideration of the problem of meaning. In this connection we must return once more to Mead's discussion of language, particularly to his analysis of the significant symbol.

A significant symbol, the reader will recall, is a gesture which arouses in an individual making the gesture the same response it arouses in the individual to whom it is addressed. The individual takes the attitude of the other toward his own gestures. In this process every gesture comes to stand for a particular response, the response which it elicits at once in the individual to whom it is addressed and in the individual making it; and this particular response for which it stands is its *meaning* as a significant symbol. The very essence of thinking is this act of internalization in our experience of the external conversation of gestures which we hold with other individuals. The internalized gestures are significant symbols because they have the same *meaning* for all individuals of a given social group.

This process of adjustment of individuals to one another through communication by means of significant symbols is the meaning of *meaning*. Meaning, accordingly, always originates in human social experience; it is implicit in the structure of the social act.<sup>33</sup>

There is evident in this analysis a connection between anticipation and meaning and between meaning and image. Meaning is the anticipation of an act not yet made, but which might be made, in response to objects or persons in one's environment. The person anticipates or "imagines" the object not present or the act of another not yet performed. Both the meaning and the image are functional in character. Thus to the child a ball is something to bounce on the floor; to the scientist it is a mathematically structured sphere. In both instances the meaning of the ball and the image of it arise in a social matrix of communication, and are conditioned by the function they fulfill.

Meaning is thus a complex phenomenon. It not only grows out of experience but gains breadth and inclusiveness with it. It is not isolated but is a functioning part of an ongoing experience. Like words, meanings form associations with one another, with objects, and with relations. The associa-

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<sup>33</sup> See Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, pp. 75-82. Substantially the same point of view has been held by John Dewey for a generation. He writes, "... the meaning of native activities is not native; it is acquired. It depends upon interaction with a matured social medium." (*Human Nature and Conduct*. New York: Holt, 1922, p. 90). See also Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (New York: Norton, 1929), chap. v.



tions give meaning to each. Our understanding of any object or event is increased when we connect it with many other objects or events. This is readily seen in the formal definitions of words, when one word is defined by another word and that by still another, and so on. A word, like an image, means something beyond itself. Both are symbols which represent something other than themselves. What makes both words and images vehicles of thought, however, is their reference, not to other words or images, but to organized experiences, to types.<sup>34</sup>

To conclude our analysis, the nature of thought can be derived only from meaning. Meaning alone can give significance to words and images, and meaning alone can make thought more than gibberish.

### The Social Functions of Language

Language is fundamentally social. Language has evolved from the animal gesture in order to satisfy the needs of people in groups.

Since most individual needs can be satisfied only in group living, language has been an important instrument for making these needs known and for having them gratified through concerted action. Language arises and is preserved because of its effectiveness in binding individuals together into a social group. As a means of communication and of social control, language has played a role second to no other human function.

**Language Is Social Communication.** It is a sociological commonplace that basic to all human social organization is interdependence or sociality. Human association, as distinguished from mere commensalism, is a form of social interaction in which members communicate with each other.<sup>35</sup> Human society is a form of communication; it involves the participation of persons in mutual activities and in a common enterprise. More important still, the type of communication which we call language—in contrast to that which is purely gestural, as in the case of the animal cry where the gesture of one animal orients another animal toward an external situation—is *self-conscious*.<sup>36</sup> It involves the act of one person

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<sup>34</sup> See W. B. Pillsbury and C. L. Meader, *The Psychology of Language* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1928), p. 182.

<sup>35</sup> The relationship of "commensalism" referred to above is a type of association in which there is no active mutuality or cooperation among its members. Apartment-house neighbors, formal college classes, and hotel dwellers are representative of this type of relationship.

<sup>36</sup> The writer is not unmindful of the fact that human communication takes place on a subconscious level, as in the case of such human groups as mobs, crowds, and audi-



taking the role of another whom he is influencing. The process of communication is not, accordingly, the transmission of abstract ideas only, but the act of putting oneself in the place of another person's attitude, wherein the symbol that affects another affects the individual himself and in the same manner. Insofar as the communicant evokes in himself the same act that he elicits from others he is contributing to the organization of the human community. Society, as Dewey has emphasized again and again, exists *in* communication. The greater the interpenetrative communication, the more organized and cohesive is the society which it engenders. G. H. Mead has made a penetrating observation in this connection. With the notion of an ideal system of communication in mind, he writes:

If that system of communication could be made theoretically perfect, the individual would affect himself as he affects others in every way. That would be the ideal of communication, an ideal attained in logical discourse wherever it is understood. The meaning of that which is said is here the same to one as it is to everybody else. Universal discourse is then the formal ideal of communication. If communication can be carried through and made perfect, then there would exist the kind of democracy . . . in which each individual would carry just the response in himself that he knows he calls out in the community. That is what makes communication in the significant sense the organizing process in the community.<sup>37</sup>

It is not necessary to speculate regarding the value of *ideal* communication to discern communication's vast importance to language and to civilization. The development of civilization has been determined by the expansion of the radius of communication. Through communication, as Sapir suggests, the whole civilized world is made, for certain purposes, the "psychological equivalent" of a primitive tribe in which, by virtue of a common body of symbols, everyone understands everyone else.<sup>38</sup> The importance of communication as an organizing principle is most aptly illustrated by our common understanding of the world of science, where knowledge transcends

ences. Clearly, persons in a crowd are mutually influenced or controlled by one another; there is communication of an attitude from one person to another. But the level of communication is certainly more "primitive," i.e., involving less interpersonal identification, than that which takes place on the plane of human social organization. This form of communication, it might be added, belongs more properly in a discussion of collective behavior.

<sup>37</sup> Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, p. 327. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press.

<sup>38</sup> E. Sapir, "Communication," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), Vol. IV, p. 80.



geographic and cultural boundaries. The communication of scientific knowledge has up to now resulted in greater social unity than any other aspect of the symbolic process.

While stressing the socializing character of communication, we should not lose sight of its individualizing nature. As Sapir, with his unusual sensitivity for the subtle psychological components of language observes, language is the most potent single factor in the growth of individuality.<sup>39</sup> For instance, even the use of the voice is individualized by social communication. Voice is a physiological process, but the manner of its use is determined by cultural expectancies. The cadences peculiar to an individual's section or community are incorporated into his speech. The class-membership and even the occupation of an individual are to some extent reflected in his voice.<sup>40</sup> Certainly the melody pattern of overt speech is an individual adaptation to social expectations.<sup>41</sup>

There are other individualized aspects of human communication. The speed of articulation is largely an individual habit; the structure and length of sentences varies from individual to individual; the quality and range of vocabulary differ remarkably in accordance with such individual factors as intelligence, education, and class-membership; and the pitch of the voice is closely related to the emotional stability of the individual.<sup>42</sup>

**Language as a Means of Social Control.** In the act of communicating his needs to adults the child is utilizing an elementary technique of influencing the behavior of others. The sound of his voice initiates an act in others to satisfy his needs. This rudimentary modification by the child of the behavior of adults marks an initial stage in a more complex process of social control. It is highly probable that the chief cause of the origin and development of language lies in its utility in influencing organisms which are similarly constituted. Language, although it might conceivably have arisen for other reasons, would hardly have been preserved had it not somehow vouchsafed the stability and continued existence of the group. From its beginning, language must have served one fundamental purpose. *to influence the thinking and behavior of men in relation to one another.*

With the refinement of both social life and the symbolic process, the

<sup>39</sup> Sapir, *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. IX, p. 160.

<sup>40</sup> See T. H. Pear, *Voice and Personality* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1931).

<sup>41</sup> See E. Sapir, "Speech as a Personality Trait," *Am. J. of Soc.*, 32 (1927), 892-905.

<sup>42</sup> Some of these characteristics and others besides are briefly reviewed in E. Sapir, "Language," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. IX, p. 160.



verbalized control of others became progressively more institutionalized and subtle. Control on this more advanced level is regulation in the interest of social solidarity and of the community as a whole. At the same time it is increasingly more subconscious and obscured. This is especially true in literature and in education. In these activities man is seldom aware that he is either employing or submitting to verbalized control. He no longer thinks of language as a control but as a means of interaction with other human beings.

**Language as a Tool for Social Cooperation.** Man has become so fully socialized that he easily engages in cooperative relationships with others. The achievement by an individual of certain ends requires the cooperation, or at least the sympathy, of others. It is necessary for us to keep clearly in mind here the account we have given of the process of communication on the human level. Communication is the act of putting oneself in the place of another, so that the symbol which affects the other affects the individual himself similarly. The control of an individual in a cooperative act takes place when he can "take the role of the other," to use Mead's phrase. In the absence of the process of role-taking, genuine cooperation cannot be achieved; for the effect of this role-taking lies in the control which it gives to the individual over his own responses. Cooperation involves not only mutual control but *self-control*.

Cooperative language is rational because the people who use it are dominated by a common purpose; it is sensible because each individual in a cooperative act adjusts himself to the meaning of that purpose as expressed in the act of each. The language of the psychotic is so often senseless because it lacks a controlling purpose. The psychotic person is violent or silly because he has little or no *control* over his own linguistic symbols. He is out of contact with reality because he cannot take the role of the other. He is isolated and withdrawn because communication, the act of putting himself in another's attitude, is diminished. The symbols in the act of communication do not affect others as they affect himself so that cooperation with them is difficult or impossible. The psychotic cannot cooperate with other psychotics for the same reason. Such orderly behavior in the patient-community as exists, therefore, is accommodative rather than cooperative. It is achieved by external control: humoring, cajoling, persuading, suggesting, or coercing.

The function of language as a tool of cooperation may be demonstrated further by comparing this form of interaction with that in lower animals. In his study of chimpanzees, who are well-known for being highly social, Kohler found very little genuine social cooperation. They did not participate



in concerted action toward a common end.<sup>43</sup> The social activities of all lower animals are fundamentally gregarious rather than cooperative as we are using this term. The form of concerted action, for example, which is manifested in animal defense, when the cry of one arouses all the others to united action, is not a highly coordinated form of behavior. It is mechanical and "instinctive." The cries of apes, which frequently are singled out as rudimentary forms of speech, are more adequately described by Malinowski's term "phatic communion," a condition in which the animals are placed in affective rapport with one another.<sup>44</sup> The vocal gestures of anthropoids are a more complex and specialized form of communication than that found in animals below them in the phylogenetic scale, but they are not a medium of cooperation.

In saying this we are not denying the existence of elementary forms of cooperation among lower animals; we are, rather, denying its consummation through the medium of language as we have used the term in this chapter. Scientists have long recognized the existence of cooperative behavior in lower animals, have found that they do not act entirely on the level of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Darwin, to whom the theory of the competitive ferocity of the lower animals is historically attributed, was by no means unaware of the concerted nature of much animal behavior.<sup>45</sup> Kropotkin, a Russian scholar, wrote a whole book in order to establish the view that all is not struggle and survival in the animal world.<sup>46</sup> Contemporary biologists and psychologists have added further confirmation of this conclusion.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> W. Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes*, trans. by E. Winter (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), supplement, "Building in Common."

<sup>44</sup> See B. Malinowski's supplementary essay, "Primitive Languages," in C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923).

<sup>45</sup> See Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1890).

<sup>46</sup> P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid in the Animal World* (New York: Knopf, 1914).

<sup>47</sup> The student is referred to the following studies which are concerned with this problem: W. C. Allee, *Animal Aggregations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); M. P. Crawford, "Cooperative Solving of Problems by Young Chimpanzees," *Comp. Psychol. Monogr.*, 1937, No. 68; Ashley-Montagu, "'Social Instincts,'" *Scientific American*, 182 (1950), 54-56. G. Murphy, L. B. Murphy, and T. M. Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1937); C. N. Winslow, "The Social Behavior of Cats," *J. Compar. Psychol.*, 37 (1944), 297-326. Since this chapter was completed, M. F. Ashley-Montagu has given us a most up-to-date confirmation of the same conclusion. See his *On Being Intelligent* (New York: Schuman, 1951).



**Conclusion.** Our discussion of the social functions of language is now completed. These functions, we have seen, consist of social communication, social control, and social cooperation. These are characteristically human activities and they are determined and facilitated by human language. If human cooperation is not as universal as man might wish, this shortcoming is in part attributable to defective communication. If man's control of man is still too brutish to assuage his moral conscience, this might be a product of his uncooperativeness. At all events, the surrender of individuality which modern man mistakenly ascribes to the omnipresence of social control, is not its necessary consequence. On the contrary, as G. H. Mead clearly points out,

... social control, so far from tending to crush out the human individual or to obliterate his self-conscious individuality, is, on the contrary, actually constitutive of and inextricably associated with that individuality; for the individual is what he is, as a conscious and individual personality, just in so far as he is a member of society, involved in the social process of experience and activity, and thereby socially controlled in his conduct.<sup>48</sup>

## Language and Culture

As we pointed out in the introductory section of this chapter, language is the transmitting mechanism of human ideas and forms of behavior, the sole carrier of human culture. Language, however, is also a *product* of culture, shaped and directed at every turn by the customs or expectancies of the human group. Nowhere is the characteristically human quality of language more clearly disclosed than in its inseparability from culture. Because of its great importance to social psychology, we shall examine at this point the relation between language and culture.

**Language and Tools.** Anthropologists are fond of calling man a tool-making animal. Certainly nothing in the whole range of human activities more adequately characterizes the social and intellectual qualities of man than the making and using of tools. Language itself, indeed, is one of his most useful tools.

As with so many aspects of the relation of man to other species, man's use of tools strikes one by what seems to be its utter novelty. If apes, for example, do not possess a genuine culture, do they possess tools? Köhler's experiments with chimpanzees show that these animals, after a lapse of

<sup>48</sup> Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, p. 255. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press.



considerable time and great effort, learned to put separate bamboo rods together to make larger ones, put one box on top of another, and the like, in order to reach bananas suspended in their cages. They even learned to chew down the end of a stick in order to fit it into the hollow end of a cane. This is inventive behavior, and suggests the existence of a protoculture among the apes.

The protoculture of the apes, however, particularly as it applies to tool-making, has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the inventiveness of man. Kroeber points out that the chimpanzee finds inventiveness very arduous. If he cannot solve a problem quickly he becomes angry and gives up. Patience and forethought, so characteristic of all inventiveness and problem-solving, are poorly developed in the chimpanzee.<sup>49</sup> Even pre-Neolithic men lacked these qualities. As Kroeber says: "They would not sit down today to commence something that would not be available for use until a month later. What they wanted they wanted quickly. To think ahead, to sacrifice present convenience to future advantage, was evidently foreign to their way of life."<sup>50</sup>

This passage suggests a very important fact concerning man, tools, and language. The anthropoid's inventiveness is practiced solely in the interest of the adaptation of the organism to its immediate environment. It is a fundamental characteristic of man, however, that he can prevision a future course of action and that, in so doing, he will shape the environment to his own uses. Man is not merely an adaptive organism but an inventive and transforming animal as well. He alone of all animals can make tools by means of other tools.<sup>51</sup>

Not only do the anthropoids not set a future course of action nor set up a collective goal in advance, but they are totally devoid of a settled and enduring set of customs or traditions. In the absence of such traditions an animal has no mechanism for transmitting his tools and inventions to future generations. Again, previsioning of a future course of action involves the capacity of imaginative construction, of the power of abstraction. It demands, more specifically, the ability of dealing with objects and events *indirectly*. It is man's indirect control of his environment which more clearly reveals the relation between tools and language. The invention and use of tools involves the use of language, for language as a system of concepts or

49 A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1948), p. 59.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 631.

51 De Laguna, *op. cit.*, p. 217.



symbols is a tool for handling the world of objects by indirect means. Language is the conceptual control of behavior, and a tool is one kind of instrument in this control. Every tool implies a prefigured end, and every prefigured end, every purpose, exists by virtue of words and abstractions. Every step in the process of tool-making involves the anticipation of an end. The "image" of the end is a concept; it symbolizes a general and abstract state of affairs. This symbolization of an objective state of affairs is precisely what language behavior is. The invention of tools thus presupposes the existence of language. Just as in speech man effects control over himself and others, so through his tools he has been able to transform nature and himself. The world which man has made and which in turn has modified him is a social group bound together by tools and speech. Whatever the relations between language and tools may originally have been we may never know, but that the two have been coexistent since man has evolved into a culture-building animal is, in view of existing evidence, the most plausible conclusion. Man's culture consists of tools and other artifacts; it is the totality of ways of living together. An important kind of living together is language; and language is intimately a part of the labyrinthian process of communication, social control, and cooperation.

**Language as an Instrument for Cultural Continuity.** If every generation of men had to begin its group life anew, human society might have originated but it could never have endured. Culture, although initiated, would have perished soon after its inception. The transmission of culture from generation to generation has been made possible through language. The accumulation of knowledge and skills, the learning of the use of tools, the dissemination of customs and traditions are made possible by language. Whatever has relevance and *meaning* can be preserved and imparted to others through words.

The communicative nature of language is also creative. A culture is seldom passed on wholly unchanged. Every generation adds some elements and eliminates others. Thus while every generation builds on the social foundation of organized life socially inherited from the past, it also initiates new modes of collective living. Through language man creates while he conserves.

Man's conception of the cultural world in which he lives is determined by his language. Indeed, man is so completely conditioned by the symbols he uses that the social values of the past, as reflected in his language, influence his perceptions and memories, his thoughts and attitudes, his emotions and feelings. The verbal concepts which constitute the language of a people



direct the course of a child's development. The process of socialization whereby a biological organism is transformed into a human being takes place through the socially transmitted meanings which constitute the culture of a group. Language, in fine, makes for social solidarity and cultural continuity.

**Language and Social Status.** In describing the relations of language and culture it is easy to convey the impression that an individual is affected through language by culture as a whole. This is not, of course, our intention. No person experiences or grasps his culture in its totality. His behavior is determined largely by a small segment of his entire culture. For example, the words a child acquires are determined by the status of his parents in the social hierarchy. The adult speaks the language of the particular social group to which he belongs. There is much evidence that the growth of language is conditioned by social status. In the linguistic environment of the illiterate or in that of the economically disadvantaged groups, individuals develop a limited vocabulary. In higher social groups, the individual learns an abundance of linguistic symbols.

Let us examine some empirical evidence in support of the foregoing claims. In his study of their speed of learning words and their use of them in their speech, Markey found that children of the higher social classes are superior to children of the poor, and that the speed ratio is 2 to 1.<sup>52</sup> Stern, on the basis of careful investigations of the language of children, concluded that a child in the upper classes is approximately eight months ahead of the poor child in linguistic skill.<sup>53</sup> His conclusion is in part derived from a study by Descoeudres of the linguistic habits of three hundred children of the upper and lower classes in Belgium.<sup>54</sup>

McCarthy's study of 140 Minneapolis children brings out similar differences. Her investigation leaves little doubt that the socio-economic status of the parents plays an important role in the linguistic development of the child. Not only does her study support the observations we have already made concerning vocabulary, but it shows that the length of the children's sentences varied according to the economic level of the children's parents. The children of the well-to-do homes consistently made longer statements than children of the lower occupational groups. She found a positive corre-

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<sup>52</sup> J. F. Markey, *The Symbolic Process* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928).

<sup>53</sup> W. Stern, *The Psychology of Early Childhood* (New York: Holt, 1930), p. 135.

<sup>54</sup> A. Descoeudres, *Le Développement de l'Enfant de Deux à Sept Ans* (Neuchâtel, n. d.).



## 3 • Language and Behavior

lation, moreover, between the use of complex sentences and upper socioeconomic status.<sup>55</sup>

Other less rigidly controlled studies point in the same direction. They show that differences in linguistic range and skill are in no small way conditioned by differences in the cultural situations to which the child is exposed. Thus, as Kimball Young writes: "We can scarcely expect the child or adult of the limited social and cultural world of the manual laborer to match in language or thought the child or adult in the wider and more complex cultural world of the educated man."<sup>56</sup>

## The Misuse of Language

Everyone is familiar with the fact that the ability to speak a common language brings people together and that the inability to do so serves as a barrier. We are less familiar with the fact that people who seem to speak a common language do not always understand each other. This problem has become the special concern of general semantics, the science of linguistic behavior.<sup>57</sup> More specifically, semantics has set up for itself the task of seeking out the causes of ambiguity in the symbolic process. The semanticists began by studying the structure of language. They found

that a common linguistic fallacy is the establishment of a necessary identification between words and that which they symbolize. As long as no misunderstanding arises as a consequence of associating a certain word with a specific object, this identification is very useful. When, however, the identification becomes a barrier to intelligent communication, it needs to be re-examined. This point is well illustrated by the stubborn Englishman in a Paris restaurant who objected to the word *pain* to identify what he called *bread* because, as he exclaimed, "It really is bread!" Hayakawa, recalling to this same tendency of connecting a symbol with the word symbolized, writes:

<sup>55</sup> McCarthy, *The Language Development of the Pre-School Child*, pp. 356-359. See further, E. A. Davis, *The Development of Linguistic Skills in Twins, Singletons with Siblings, and Only Children from Age Five to Ten Years* (Univ. Minnesota Institute Child Welf., 14, 1936).

<sup>56</sup> Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, p. 163; 2nd edition, p. 151.

<sup>57</sup> See A. Korzybski, *Science and Sanity*, 2nd ed. (Lancaster, Pa.: Science Press, 1941); S. Chase, *The Tyranny of Words* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941); W. Johnson, *People in Quandaries* (New York: Harper, 1946).



This feeling exhibits itself most strongly in those American and English tourists who seem to believe that they can make the native of any country understand English if they shout it at them long enough. They feel, that is, that the symbol *must necessarily* call to mind the thing symbolized.<sup>58</sup>

Hayakawa divides the word-symbols which make up our language into two types, the *extensional* and the *intensional*. The extensional symbols are those that stand for objects; they *represent* objects in the external world, such as chairs, tables, swimming, or automobile accidents. Intensional symbols refer to what is connoted. Their referents cannot be empirically established. Arguments based upon them are nonsensical and futile. Examples of intensional symbols are *gods, devils, gremlins, and fairies*. They are what Johnson calls "plogglies."<sup>59</sup> Intensional symbols are used freely by propagandists, advertisers, politicians, and demagogues to distort objective facts. For instance, the advertiser may suggest that you use a certain brand of toothpaste to gain "popularity," "success," or "happiness." The politician may insist that we vote for "freedom," "prosperity," "progress." By the verbal magic of intensional orientation, stereotyped words and phrases *are* what we say they are, even though they may have no relationship to reality. Thus, as Sargent points out, one of the greatest dangers of communication is "mistaking intensional meanings for extensional ones."<sup>60</sup>

A second common fallacy in the use of language is the overuse of absolutes. The semanticists believe that the logic of Aristotle brought about this overuse. According to Aristotle, human beings think and behave in accordance with three fundamental rules, namely, the law of identity, the law of the excluded middle, and the law of non-contradiction.<sup>61</sup> *The law of identity* affirms that a thing is what it is, such as, A is A, man is man. It says that "the word is the object." The law of identity is illustrated in the emotional reaction of a person to the word "syphilis." He reacts to it *as if* the word were the disease, displaying embarrassment or disgust. This mode of thinking commits the error of identifying a word with the object which it symbolizes. *The law of the excluded middle* declares that anything is either A or non-A, that it is either a man or not a man, that something is either hot or cold. This premise reflects the dominance of absolute categories in human thought and speech. *The law of non-contradiction* says

<sup>58</sup> Hayakawa, p. 31. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

<sup>59</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 77ff.

<sup>60</sup> Sargent, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>61</sup> These rules, while seldom recognized by the average individual, are commonplace to the student of formal logic.



that something cannot be both A and non-A, both a man and not a man, both success and failure.

The semanticists hold that sound thinking and sane behavior are based on other principles, namely, the laws of non-identity, non-allness, and self-reflexiveness.<sup>62</sup>

*Non-identity.* This premise holds that A is not A, a thing is not what it is, a word is not the object, the map is not the territory. In Korzybski's clever way, whatever you say a fact is, it is not; which is to say, it is only a word about it.<sup>63</sup> The semanticists do not claim that anyone, except a rare mental patient, takes this literal view of the identification of word with object. They maintain only that there is a strong tendency in human beings to *act as if* the word were the object.

*Non-allness.* Here the assertion is that A is not all A, the word does not represent all the object, the map does not represent all the territory. Through the process of abstracting, of leaving out details, we say words that do not tell all about anything. Actually, one can never say all about anything, just as one can never observe all of anything.

People are seldom aware when abstracting that they are omitting a great deal, and they *act as if* they do not know the reports of others are only abstractions. Thus they will accept second- or third-hand statements as if they were sufficient and absolutely true. They generalize about individuals and form prejudices against them—even persecute and destroy them—on the basis of such abstractions. Furthermore, they are not aware of the different levels of abstraction. They “mistake high-order inferences for first-order descriptions, and descriptions for facts, and ‘facts’ (as personally abstracted) for realities.”<sup>64</sup> The cure for this fallacious mode of thinking lies in acquiring a basic orientation to non-identity and non-allness.

*Self-reflexiveness.* This term refers to the fact that abstracting is an endless process whereby every abstraction can be further abstracted indefinitely. Thus we use words for talking about words, we make maps of maps, statements about statements, and abstracts of abstracts. The principle of self-reflexiveness calls attention to what we have already said concerning the nature of linguistic thinking, namely, that an absolute statement about anything is impossible. Many of the errors and paradoxes, as well as the endless debates on problems that have no solutions—because the questions which prompt them are meaningless—would be wiped out of human discourse if men were more self-consciously aware of the self-reflexive nature of human thinking. The errors and paradoxes

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.



arise because many of the words we use in ordinary communication are "multiordinal"; i.e., they have no *general* meaning. The meanings of multiordinal words depend on the context in, or the level of abstraction on, which they are used. Thus the ancient philosophical query, "What is truth?" or the child's question, "Who made God?" are unanswerable because they have no general meaning.<sup>65</sup>

**Language and Maladjustment.** Shorn of its excessive zeal for general semantics, Wendell Johnson's *People in Quandaries* is to date the most interesting and illuminating application of semantics to the study of maladjustive behavior. Our misunderstandings and conflicts, our emotional turmoils and miseries, says Johnson, result from our false evaluations. The maladjusted individual is a distraught idealist whose ideals are high, vague, and unrealistic. He has no definite, reasonable goals, and therefore lacks a clear frame of reference by which to determine whether or not he has achieved them. He arrives in due time to the distressing conclusion that his life is an utter failure. We have here a kind of semantic history of the well-known inferiority complex. Johnson describes the situation as follows:

Maladjusted individuals appear to take an A-is-A attitude toward the "success," or "wealth," or "happiness," or whatever other ideal they pursue. Automatically, therefore, they operate in terms of a two-valued (excluded middle) orientation in terms of which anything must be either "success" or "failure," "wealth" or "poverty," "happiness" or "misery." And the pattern is rounded out with their further assumption that nothing can be both "wealth" and "poverty," etc. (non-contradiction). Locked within this two-valued structure of orientation, they weave about themselves a web of wonderful confusion.<sup>66</sup>

The maladjusted person, including the more extreme case of the psychotic, lacks clarity in his verbal behavior. He is semantically confused and inept. He cannot put into words his own emotional problems. He does not have the linguistic clarity and accuracy required to state a problem in such a fashion that the statement itself will indicate what steps must be taken to arrive at a solution. As Johnson points out, a study of the maladjusted shows us that people can "be made deathly sick by symbols. They can be driven to wild distraction and to the most disastrous behavior by words, particularly when those words refer to their deeply personal concerns and disturb their self-evaluations."<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> See Korzybski, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.



## Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered the origin, the development, and the functions of human language. As we have pointed out, language is a unique achievement of man. Furthermore, it is fundamentally a social invention rather than an individual creation. Something so massive and yet so intricate cannot be the product of a single individual; rather, it is a patterned accumulation from countless generations. Yet, while language is an achievement of men in groups, it is capable of countless variations in answer to the individual's needs and as a product of his experience. Language thus belongs at once to the individual and to his group; it epitomizes the varied experiences of mankind and the limited events in the life of a single individual.

Language bears an important relationship to mental behavior—to imagination, thought, and reasoning. Rational conduct, as distinguished from reflex behavior, always involves an indication to the individual of the meanings which his symbolic actions have for other individuals. Mental behavior comes into being when the individual is able to indicate symbolic meanings to others and to himself at the same time. Through this ability he is not only able to communicate with others but is able to control them and cooperate with them. For these reasons language is a primary vehicle of social intercourse which shapes and is formed by group living.

We have learned in this chapter that language is often misused. The semanticists have shown us that language not only serves to give man an understanding of himself and the world, but has enabled him to build a rich variety of "verbal cocoons" in which he is tightly caught and from which he sometimes cannot escape. Thus language has served us well and at the same time tragically failed us. It has given us social intercourse and our culture, but it has failed us in the capacity to bring about complete understanding between individuals, even among those having a common language.

Finally, because the peoples of the world speak various tongues, language has failed in its "greatest capacity, the capacity to facilitate communication among the largest number of people."<sup>68</sup> The misunderstandings and social conflicts that plague the world are in no slight degree reflections of the confusion of tongues. Krout put the matter well in these words: "For the miracle of sound and sight that raised man to a higher dimension of life has also kept millions of people from communicating with each other. It has made possible a world of many little groups, each content to live unto itself, each pretending isolation and preoccupation with its own special problems. In other words, the institution of language, less than any other institution in the universal culture pattern, has been truly universal."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Krout, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.



## CHAPTER 4 :

# Group Life and Socialization

MAN IS NOT NORMALLY a solitary individual. From the moment of his birth he is dependent on others, and as he matures the range of his interactions and the scope of his participations steadily multiply and expand. At every stage of his growth the social environment is operative, even though its effects are not always open to direct observation. The human infant can be seen early to make differential responses to people in his environment. These responses are made because he is dependent upon others for survival, security, and the satisfaction of his organic needs. Because the infant *appears* to be unresponsive to others in the first weeks of his life in the group it is a mistake to suppose that the social environment has no effect upon him. Social conditioning begins to operate early. At first the infant's reactions seem to be undifferentiated, so that he responds to objects and persons indiscriminately. But by the time he is four weeks



old he begins to make differential responses, especially to the human voice.<sup>1</sup> Before very long his discriminative responses become further refined so that he is able to distinguish the voice of his mother, say, from the voices of other persons in his environment. These and many other responses of the child form his initial pattern of social relationships. This pattern molds his attitudes and actions, and serves as the basis for the development of his personality. Personality, therefore, is a product of the effects of group pressures upon the biological individual. Outside of these group pressures, outside of a social environment, human nature as we know it could not have originated and evolved. For this reason the social psychologist who is intent upon coming to grips with the central problem of his discipline, namely, the behavior of the individual in society, must give careful attention to the molding forces of group life. The raw materials of adjustment—the reflexes, glands, drives, and other elements of the infant's biological heritage—are transformed, by a long process of social and cultural conditioning, into attitudes, habits, and modes of behavior demanded by the group.

### The Process of Social Interaction

In Chapter 2 we discussed the nature and functions of social interaction. It is necessary at this stage of our discussion of personality to return to the subject, examining now the forms it assumes in social behavior.

**Interaction as an Agency of Group Life.** In Chapter 2 we defined social interaction as a type of relationship between two or more individuals in which the behavior of one modifies the behavior of the other in a reciprocal manner. It is a social-psychological agency through which group life in its elementary stage is made possible. While the process of interaction even in its simplest form is psychologically very complex, it is possible to discern three related factors at work. These factors are imitation, suggestion, and sympathy.

**Imitation.** In our description of the linguistic process in the infant and child, we called attention to the fact that the young child makes a large number of vocal sounds which he repeats many times. These responses run the whole gamut of linguistic sounds and inflections of human speech. This is an important fact to remember, for the child can

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<sup>1</sup> H. Hetzer and B. Tudor-Hart, "Die Frühesten Reaktionen auf die Menschliche Stimme," in *Soziologische und Psychologische Studien Über das Erste Lebensjahr* (Jena: C. Fischer, 1927), pp. 107-124.



imitate the words and linguistic behavior of others only because he has had prior experience in producing the basic sounds of speech himself. The same psychological process is at work in other forms of imitative behavior. The mother who observes her child moving his hand up and down and responds to his behavior by waving her own hand while saying "bye-bye," will quite soon condition him to respond in the same manner to the expression. He later imitates her because of his past experience. Imitation of the acts of another is possible only after a foundation for such acts has been laid in antecedent experience. Imitation is thus not an inherent characteristic but a learned response.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, we should expect imitation to increase as the child becomes more mature and socialized. This seems to be the case as far as present evidence goes, and it is consistent with the nature of the process of social interaction. The range of the individual's participations increases with age and experience; with the growth of experience his imitative behavior enlarges. Imitation is a social process, a means through which social interaction makes increased participation of the individual in the group possible. From the time that the child, in learning to speak, imitates others in the same way as he imitates his own vocal gestures, to the time when, as an adult, he copies the customs and fashions of his group in a manner similar to his copying of the acts of his parents, the individual has displayed the process of social learning. Imitation is a form of learning. Thus people behave similarly for two reasons, both being imitative in nature, namely, (1) they may have gone through a similar learning, or conditioning, process; or (2) they may consciously copy a form of behavior because of its social or prestige value.

The role of conditioning in unconscious imitation is fairly obvious. When a group of people rise in response to the playing of the national anthem, they do not deliberately imitate one another but act together because they were conditioned by similar experiences. They may rationalize this behavior by saying that they act from patriotic motives, which may indeed be true, but the basic stimulation was a similar experience. In this automatic imitation by one of the behavior of another prior experience of this form of behavior is presupposed. One person can imitate another person's behavior only if he has already had at least a rudimentary experience of it. As in learning to speak, one imitates another when one has imitated himself.

Conscious copying of the acts of others is a familiar phenomenon in the

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<sup>2</sup> See N. E. Miller and J. Dollard, *Social Learning and Imitation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 92.



form of imitations of fashions in the dress, conversation, and behavior of people of "importance" or those whom we admire and wish to emulate. In this sense imitation is the conscious use of a means to an end.

Imitation does not explain human behavior; it only *describes* one aspect of the process of social interaction, the aspect of uniformity of behavior. By virtue of imitation a person's behavior incorporates the attitudes, ideas, and habits of an entire group into his own action-system, thereby increasing the range of his interactions with others.

*Suggestion.* In his associations with others the human individual acquires language, beliefs, attitudes, and a host of other more or less useful habits. These habits determine an individual's behavior in various circumstances. By virtue of his possession of these habits the individual is prepared to act in certain ways. When his response to a stimulus takes place automatically, the process is called suggestion. Suggestion inhibits action along lines other than those induced by the given stimulus or situation. It narrows the field of interaction between individuals while facilitating it at the same time. The facilitation is seen in its power to effectuate an act already implicitly present, on the one hand, and by its tendency to intensify the act through prolongation of the social stimuli that produced it, on the other. Thus, if I see a person yawning, I may respond by yawning myself. This is action in accordance with a pre-existing habit. If I see many others yawning, my own yawning may be increased or intensified proportionately.

While the most extreme form of suggestion takes place in hypnosis, of far greater significance social-psychologically are the suggestions of ordinary social life. Of particular interest and practical significance are some of the differentials in susceptibility to suggestion. One study of this problem has brought to light a sex-differential in suggestion. On the whole girls in our society are more susceptible to suggestion than boys.<sup>3</sup> F. H. Allport much earlier called attention to the same differential. His conclusion was not empirically founded but was largely in the nature of an argument based on the alleged submissiveness of the female toward the male.<sup>4</sup> Age has also been singled out as a differentiating factor. Allport argues that since most of the child's knowledge is derived from his parents, and since he has a strong attitude of dependence upon them, he tends to accept their sugges-

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<sup>3</sup> C. L. Hull, *Hypnosis and Suggestibility: An Experimental Approach* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1933), p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> F. H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), p. 249.



tions implicitly. Poverty of ideas and submissiveness, he holds, are responsible for the child's suggestibility.<sup>5</sup>

More interesting and illuminating, and at the same time experimentally established, is the conclusion of Messerschmidt regarding suggestibility and age. She tested about twenty-five children ranging in ages from six to sixteen years. She found only a slight amount of suggestibility in children up to the age of four, a gradual increase up to the age of nine, and a progressive decrease thereafter. Children from seven to eight are more suggestible than they are at any other age.<sup>6</sup> If we are correct in defining *suggestion* as the release of pre-existing attitudes and habits in the individual, then it is clear that the young child is relatively impervious to suggestion because he is still relatively unsocialized, particularly as regards the acquisition of language, with which both imitation and suggestion are intimately related.

The role of prestige or authority has long been recognized as a factor in suggestibility. Advertisers and propagandists use suggestion freely in an effort to inculcate or modify attitudes and habits in individuals and groups. The prestige of a name or a reputation or of expert opinion often has a remarkable effect upon those individuals who are susceptible to various forms of suggestion.<sup>7</sup>

It is not our intention to present in this section an exhaustive statement on suggestion as it operates in social interaction. Our brief exposition of the subject should make clear to the student that, inadequate as our knowledge of the deeper layers of suggestion may be, there is no doubt that it involves social control—the influence of one individual by another—and so is fundamentally a social-psychological phenomenon. For this reason it has unquestionable relevance and import for the study of social interaction, the group, and the socialization of the individual.

*Sympathy.* To the student in search of basic knowledge of human behavior it is disquieting to realize that a mechanism so fundamental in social life as sympathy has received far less perceptive study than it deserves. Theories of human nature based on the concept of sympathy

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>6</sup> R. Messerschmidt, "The Suggestibility of Boys and Girls between the Ages of Six and Sixteen Years," *J. Genet. Psychol.*, 43 (1933), 405-437.

<sup>7</sup> See H. T. Moore, "The Comparative Influence of Majority and Expert Opinion," *Amer. J. Psychol.*, 32 (1921), 16-20; C. E. Arnett, H. A. Davidson, and H. N. Lewis, "Prestige as a Factor in Attitude Changes," *Sociol. Soc. Res.*, 16 (1931), 49-55; L. W. Doob, *Propaganda* (New York: Holt, 1935).



were formulated at least as early as the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> McDougall developed a theory concerning sympathy, but it has not received the approval of most social psychologists. Like every significant problem which concerned him, sympathy had for McDougall an instinctive basis which, if not contradicted, has been unsupported by experimental findings. The confusions surrounding the attitude of sympathy have been multiplied by equating it with "empathy," "identification," and "introjection."

Let us examine these closely related terms. The term *empathy* (*Einfühlung*) was first employed systematically by Theodor Lipps to describe the aesthetic experience.<sup>9</sup> In empathy an individual projects his feelings and emotions into the object of his experience. Thus one is in an empathic relation with another person when one experiences or shares the latter's thoughts and feelings. One projects one's subjective state into an object when one describes a dilapidated cottage as a "miserable shack." While there is considerable similarity between sympathy and the experiencing of another's feelings, there is a highly questionable connection between sympathy and the projection of subjective states into physical objects.

The terms *identification* and *introjection* have been contributed to the language of psychology by psychoanalysis. It is difficult to see in what way these terms differ from empathy; yet, at the same time, they do not have precisely the same meaning as sympathy. When one man *identifies* himself with another man he is in his imagination putting himself in the other's place, to be sure; but is he also in sympathetic relationship with him? When a circus performer balances deftly on a tight wire and we follow his movements with our own bodily responses, are we imitating him, or are we influenced by suggestion? Are we identifying ourselves with him, internalizing (introjecting) the emotionally charged character of his delicately balanced position, or making his feelings (supposing we know what they are!) our own?

In the interests of clarity it should be remarked that *identification* is a term used by psychoanalysts to denote the act of shaping one's ego in accordance with an ideal. Thus the boy identifies himself with his father by holding the latter up as a model whom he imitates. It is not necessary that the boy have sympathy for the father; he may, indeed, actually fear him.

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<sup>8</sup> See D. Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, 1920); A. Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: Bell, 1911).

<sup>9</sup> T. Lipps, *Leitfaden der Psychologie* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1903). See also by the same author, *Ästhetik* (Hamburg und Leipzig: L. Voss, 1903-1906).



Sympathy, as we shall indicate, implies a high degree of responsive relationship between two individuals. The common bond of these terms is not that they are similar but that they all presuppose some degree of *ego formation* before they can operate in human behavior.<sup>10</sup>

The term *sympathy*, then, is an ambiguous one. Identification and introjection are elements in sympathetic behavior; they are not themselves forms of sympathy. We can perhaps inject more clarity and precision into the concept by avoiding purely verbal definitions and by describing it, initially at least, as a product of social conditioning. The writer once witnessed an elderly woman escape instant death by a hairsbreadth. There was an expression of extreme horror on her face, and the cries of other spectators were momentarily terrifying. The writer's own fright, though unexpressed, was paralyzing. Was his fear induced by the woman's dangerous position? Partly, no doubt. The crucial source of his fear, however, was *his own conditioned fear of danger and of the imminence of death*. The conditioned fear is circular in character, so that a person fears danger or pain in others because he has had the experience of being in dangerous or painful situations himself. Unless he has had a prior experience, at least in *form*, of these situations, he cannot properly be said to have a sympathetic understanding of their meaning. Familiarity with sympathy-inducing situations is necessarily presupposed in all experiences of sympathy. Unique or novel conditions cannot arouse sympathy.

This is a provisional formulation. Sympathy as a social-psychological attitude is considerably more complex than this simple definition might suggest. To disclose its profounder nature we must turn once more to the symbolic interactionist position of G. H. Mead. As we stated in Chapter 2, man is a role-taking animal. Personality is a way of behaving which we attribute to others because we perceive it in ourselves. In this manner we can imagine ourselves feeling, thinking, and doing what another person is feeling, thinking, and doing. It is this assumption of another's role that gives meaning to one's own behavior.

In sympathy we arouse in ourselves the attitude of the individual with whom we are in rapport. "We feel with him and we are able so to feel ourselves into the other because we have, by our own attitude, aroused in

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<sup>10</sup> This is confirmed by such investigations as those of Berne, Piaget, and Murphy. See the following: E. V. C. Berne, "An Experimental Investigation of Social Behavior Patterns in Young Children" (University of Iowa Stud. Child Welfare, 4, No. 3, 1930); J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932); L. B. Murphy, *Social Behavior and Child Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937).



ourselves the attitude of the person whom we are assisting.”<sup>11</sup> We cannot establish a sympathetic relationship with another person unless we respond in such a way as to answer his expectations, for if we fail in this we cannot arouse sympathy in ourselves. If the other person fails to respond, we cannot sympathize with him. Sympathy thus always implies a degree of cooperation between two people; outside a cooperative relationship sympathy cannot take place. The relationship is cooperative in that the individual arouses in himself a certain response because his behavior affects himself as it does another.<sup>12</sup>

This fact reveals simultaneously the fruitfulness and the limitations of sympathetic behavior. Sympathy increases the participatory activities of an individual, expands his range of interaction, and deepens his relations with others. It limits his integrative adjustments to others because it can take place only in cooperative activities. This is readily seen as we pass from the individual's associations with members of his immediate family to his more impersonal contacts with the community, thence to his distant relations with members of society as a whole. Our sympathies are generally deeper for our injured children than for the pain-wracked wounded on the field of battle.

The scientific merit of the foregoing analysis of sympathy is its unsentimental character. People are sympathetic toward one another, not necessarily because they are altruistic—though the great value of altruism is fully acknowledged—but because, having grown up in relations of mutual dependence where role-perception is unavoidable, they cannot escape it. Sympathy is neither an instinct nor an inherent characteristic but a socially learned and culturally acquired response. Its growth and expansion are determined by the mutual relations of people with one another. As these relations become more interpenetrative, people are enabled to reach a fuller mutual understanding. Man is basically a social being, not because he displays altruism or pity for his fellows, but because he is able with increasing effectiveness to play the roles of others. Altruism and pity, like sympathy itself, are not the causes of concerted living but some of its most prized and marvelous achievements.

*Conclusion.* Let us now briefly summarize our discussions of social interaction. When man in his contact with other men effects a change in any of them, so that each adjusts himself to the behavior

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<sup>11</sup> G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 299.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.



of another, we call the process *social interaction*. Social interaction is at once the condition and consequence of group existence. It is a function of both the individual and the group, and therefore is neither wholly an individual nor a group phenomenon, but a social-psychological process. Social interaction is a process involving imitation, suggestion, and sympathy. Imitation is a form of learning by which uniformity in the behavior of members of a group is partly achieved. By means of suggestion an individual acts in accordance with pre-existing habits. Suggestion inhibits action along some lines and facilitates it along others. In this respect it plays an important part in the process of social control. Sympathy, while related to and at times involving empathy, identification, and introjection, is not the same as these mental "mechanisms." It is a product of social conditioning in which one person, by virtue of social dependence, takes the role of another and thereby intimately perceives the mental state of the other. By means of it consensus and social cohesion are greatly enhanced. For this reason its social value must not be underestimated.

## The Human Group

There are other than human groups in existence and some of them, notably colonies of bees and ants, are characterized by considerable social complexity. Our concern in social psychology is exclusively with the human group, for it is in the human group that the individual achieves his personality. Man, even the most independent, is never wholly self-sufficient. In contrast to other animals he is the most helpless creature, and more than any other animal his dependence upon others is permanent. His basic and derived needs can find satisfaction for the most part only in groups. The forms of social interaction which we have described take place in the group; indeed, they *are* the group. Interaction takes place between individuals, and two or more individuals interacting with each other constitute an elementary social group. A group may thus be said to be "a unity of interacting personalities."<sup>13</sup>

We have said that man's needs can be satisfied only in a group. A group is in some way related to the satisfaction of human needs and interests, such as survival, security, friendship, and affection. It arises because through concerted effort man can attain the goals which he cannot reach in isolation. In view of this fact we can also define a group as an association of persons

<sup>13</sup> E. W. Burgess, ed., *Personality and the Social Group* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), chap. x.



having a community of interests. The two definitions are complementary. The first calls attention to the interactional character of the group. The second stresses the interests and activities common to its members. The first emphasizes process; the second, content.<sup>14</sup> Together the two aspects give us a rounded picture of the human group; together they constitute the total social field of the individual.

A group, finally, is not a mere aggregation of people. It is always an organization of individuals into definite patterned relationships by virtue of the operation of common meanings. It is a group when its members act in accordance with a system of symbols. This is but a more abstract way of saying that a group is a field of interacting persons who pursue common as well as diverse interests and who possess a common culture.

**Characteristics of the Human Group.** To the sociologist the group is the basic unit of sociological investigation. Accordingly, the bulk of study in the area of group formation has been done by him. The social psychologist will profit by examining the properties of groups as they are described by the sociologist.

*Interdependence.* Mutual dependence is a fundamental and indispensable property of the human group. More important than dependence, however, is *interdependence*. Dependence is largely a passive trait. Interdependence, on the other hand, is an interactional process. More than any other social-psychological factor it exhibits the social-interactional character of human relationships. In modern society the range of interdependent relationships has been vastly extended and the psychological quality of the relationships has become increasingly impersonal. Thus a person who sits down to sip his morning coffee and the individuals who labor on the plantations to produce it are interdependent, but their relations to one another are impersonal.

Our chief concern, however, is not with this extended meaning of interdependence. We wish rather to emphasize the fact that group life is such that individuals can be said to be part of a group only when somewhere in their daily life each depends upon another to carry out his individual activities. A hermit may be able to carry on a physical existence, but being independent of others socially he is psychologically very constricted. It is doubtful that any individual long removed from others can remain a balanced individual. Having no contacts with others, he needs to make no

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<sup>14</sup> The "content" of the group, the totality of its customs, traditions, inventions, and the like, we call culture. This subject will be examined later in this chapter and in considerable detail in chaps. x-xii.



adjustments to them. Isolation is a negation of interdependence and consequently inimical to both individual and social development.

*Social control.* The nature and function of social control were surveyed in the discussion of language. It was shown that when a child communicates his needs to the adults around him he is influencing or controlling their behavior. At the same time, however—and this is seen especially with the progressive maturation of the child—the adults are controlling his behavior. The child's control by his parents and by other adults is necessary not only in the interests of his own socialization but because it vouchsafes the stability and permanence of the group as a whole.

In the larger social group, the group as a whole exercises control over the individual. This is done by the establishment of rules to govern their collective living. These rules regulate the conduct of every member of the group. Social control in the form of rules of conduct is universal. It is exercised in such forms of regulation as prescription, restriction, suppression, approval, disapproval, persuasion, and the like. So conceived, social control is the coercion or persuasion of the individual to subordinate his interests to the interests of the group if his interests are opposed to those of the larger community. Its purpose is twofold: (1) it regulates social action by giving people a common set of expectations; and (2) it assures the continuity of social life. Common expectancies are essential for human behavior for they enable us to anticipate the conduct of others. Because human customs and institutions perpetuate themselves, they safeguard the stability of human society by effecting a relatively smooth and orderly transmission of the social heritage. Social control is the more necessary the more varied the institutions and practices of a people are. Generally speaking, the greater the heterogeneity of life in a group, the greater is the need for controlling the narrower in favor of the wider interests of its members.

*Consensus.* In emphasizing the importance of social control, we may convey the impression that individuality and independence of action are inimical to social order. However, insofar as the group or community expresses *common* interests of which the individual's is a part, it sustains the individual by permitting him to share in a common heritage. In this manner the individual escapes isolation and finds his own personality. Instead of merely conforming externally and suffering restrictions reluctantly, human beings, through *consensus*, bear an affirmative attitude in which they adjust differences because they are cognizant of the greater social consequences of their behavior. The individual now identifies his wishes with those of society and adjusts his interests to achieve desired social ends. The coercive and suppressive quality which characterizes much of



social control is now largely mitigated, for in consensus the individual wills largely as society wills.

**Kinds of Groups.** The classification of groups into various types is not of primary interest to the social psychologist. He is chiefly concerned with the dynamic relations between individuals which constitute a group and the effect of the group upon the behavior of the individual. Since we shall find it necessary, however, to study the structure and functions of the primary group in particular, and to show some of the effects of secondary institutions later, a few words about the kinds of groups is here in order.

**Primary groups.** These are groups in which the interactions of its members are direct, face-to-face, intimate, and personal. In older American society the neighborhood and close-knit village community were important, in addition to the family and play-group, in shaping the attitudes and habits of the developing individual. In contemporary society the family and the play-group are the most potent agencies in personality formation, but even the effect of the family has been declining. The primary group is basic chiefly because it is fundamental in forming the habits and ideals of the individual.<sup>15</sup> Young touches the essential character of the primary group by describing it as "the nursery of the personality."<sup>16</sup> Certainly in its functions of control over the impulses of the child, the inculcation of discipline and self-control, stimulus to cooperative living, and the transmission of the social heritage, the primary group has played a signal role in human society.

A consideration of the primary group is relevant to the study of human behavior because of its *psychological structure*. This structure induces people to act in certain common ways; they closely identify themselves with one another, so that whatever befalls one person in the group becomes of direct and intimate concern to all the others. It is in this close identification, too, that sympathy develops. Sympathy, indeed, constitutes the psychological structure of the primary group.

**Secondary groups.** Social interaction in the secondary group consists of indirect contacts, of formal and impersonal relationships. While the primary group contacts are permeated with affectional and

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<sup>15</sup> This is, indeed, its chief function according to Cooley, whose name is most widely associated with the concept of the primary group, particularly with the primary group's influence on the individual. See C. H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York: Scribner, 1909).

<sup>16</sup> K. Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1941), p. 125.



sentimental ties, the secondary group relations are significantly more objective and "rational"—i.e., they are motivated largely by the logic of ends and means, and by impersonal, corporate control. Secondary group contacts are segmental and superficial rather than total and deep-seated.

These secondary contacts have become increasingly dominant in our way of life, so that a child growing up in modern society is conditioned, even in the primary group, by their impersonal quality. Kimball Young, reflecting on the same subject, puts it tersely when he writes:

In due course these impersonal, special-interest, and highly differentiated relations, and their accompanying cultural values and practices, influence the family and neighborhood to a point where we can see the disappearance of many of the intimate and comprehensive interactions in these groups also. The decline of economic, educational, civic, recreational, and religious functions in the home is an evidence of these altered values.<sup>17</sup>

There are other classifications of groups besides that of primary and secondary, but they are primarily of sociological interest. The most recurring ones in the sociological literature are these: in-group and out-group, vertical and horizontal groups, permanent and impermanent groups, and formal and informal groups.

### Socialization of the Individual: Social Learning

We have reviewed the nature, function, and kinds of groups that play a role in the molding of human behavior. Our next task is to show in some detail that the growth of personality cannot be understood apart from the interactions of an individual with other members of his group. While the biological heritage is recognized as forming an important basis of human personality, this personality is largely a product of the biological individual's participation in group life. There is no personality, there is no *human* behavior, outside social interaction and social participation. An isolated individual may adapt himself adequately to his physical surroundings and through this adaptation maintain himself as a biological individual without becoming a *person*. Having been removed from contacts with others in a group, he has acquired no language, no customs, and no rules by which to regulate his contacts with others.

**The Effect of Isolation.** The effect of isolation has been noted by many investigators. The cases of *feral* children have been widely discussed. A feral child is an unsocialized or undomesticated child by vir-

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 808. Reprinted by permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.



tue of extreme or prolonged isolation from a human environment.<sup>18</sup> Although a number of questions might be raised concerning the accuracy of the accounts of these cases, there is no doubt concerning the existence of the cases themselves.

The Wolf-children of India are good illustrations of the effect of isolation. These children were two girls, one slightly over eight years old and the other somewhat under two. Not much is known about the younger child, for she died soon after her discovery. The second girl, who lived to be seventeen years of age, for a long time retained her animal habits, such as walking on all fours, roaming about at night and sleeping during the day, and eating raw meat. Through gentle handling and training by the wife of the missionary who discovered the children, she acquired human traits, but very slowly. Assuming an erect posture, for example, required a year and a half, and some of her other "wolf-traits" were abandoned even more slowly. The most illuminating fact about her development is that at the time of her death at seventeen she had acquired a vocabulary of fewer than fifty words.

A more recent example of the retarding effect of isolation is the case reported by Kingsley Davis.<sup>19</sup> Anna, an illegitimate child, was incarcerated by her mother in a second-floor room in an isolated farmhouse in Pennsylvania when she was six or eight months old. When she was found at the age of five by officers of the humane society, she was dull, listless, and apathetic. After nine months of care in the county home she became alert and emotionally responsive, but she made almost no progress in the acquisition of language. Later she was placed in a private home. Although she received much more attention and care in her new environment, and although she improved in many directions, she remained on the whole backward and made no improvement in her speech.

These cases sharply emphasize the fact that human qualities arise, and human capacities improve, only in a human environment. Although he has the *capacity* of learning, man will not develop it outside a social group. While his reflexes and other reaction tendencies will enable him to adapt himself to his natural environment, to protect himself from harmful stimuli, and to carry on his vegetative processes, they will not, unaided by social

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive presentation of this subject, see the following: P. S. Squires, "Wolf Children of India," *Amer. J. Psychol.*, 38 (1927), 313-315; J. Itard, *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, Eng. trans. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932); A. Gesell, *Wolf Child and Human Child* (New York: Harper, 1940); J. A. L. Singh and R. M. Zingg, *Wolf-Children and Feral Man* (New York: Harper, 1942).

<sup>19</sup> K. Davis, "A Case of Extreme Social Isolation of a Child," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 45 (1940), 554-565.



stimulus to learning or by a heritage of man-made instruments, such as language and institutions, enable him to become a truly human being.

**The Determinants of Perception.** It has been pretty well established that our perception of the environment will differ in accordance with our experience. Through environmental conditioning we perceive the world not only "as it is"—that is, as an orderly arrangement of physical objects and events—but also as modified by memory, imagination, needs, the opinion and expectations of others, etc. In the technical language of psychology, our perceptions are determined by *autochthonous*—or more simply, *structural*—and *functional* factors.<sup>20</sup> The structural properties of perception are independent of the individual's needs, emotions, imagination, and the like. The functional aspects of perception are those properties which are affected by the person's social-psychological organization—by his memory, needs, habits, and past experiences.

The functional factors derive primarily from personal-social interactions. This is confirmed by the well-known experiment by Bruner and Goodman on the differential perception of coins by children of poor and of well-to-do families. These investigators asked two groups of children to judge the size of various coins. One group was drawn from the slums of Boston, the other from the homes of business and professional people. The children of the slums tended to overestimate the size of the coins much more frequently than the children from the "better" area. The difference, according to the investigators, is a function of need, thus suggesting that the perception of an object is affected by the personality of the percipient. On the basis of this experiment—but going somewhat beyond the evidence—they declare that the greater the social value or need for an object, the more will its perception be affected by functional determinants.<sup>21</sup>

The selective nature of perception and learning is not exhausted by these two determinants, the structural and functional factors. There is yet another determinant of learning, similar to and yet differing from the functional. This may be called the *cultural* determinant. The structural determinants of perception are physiological in character, so that we perceive the natural world around us as we do by virtue of the neurophysiological character of

<sup>20</sup> The term *autochthonous* has been used largely by the Gestalt psychologists. By virtue of its "clumsiness" we reject it in favor of *structural*. The term *functional* as we employ it here is Muenzinger's. See K. Muenzinger, *Psychology: The Science of Behavior* (New York: Harper, 1942).

<sup>21</sup> J. S. Bruner and C. C. Goodman, "Value and Need as Organizing Factors in Perception," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 42 (1947), 33-44.



the organs of perception and learning. They are constituted, furthermore, by the physical qualities of the perceived object. We are likely to perceive a red object in a field of neutral-colored ones more easily because it stands out by virtue of its contrast. The functional determinants of perception are motivational in character; they impel us to see the world in terms of motivational categories, such as desire, wish, need, and temperament. The cultural determinants of perception are those factors which cause us to see the world in terms of customs, traditions, and ideals.

The perception of the world, then, is never a simple one. We seldom apprehend it solely by means of a single determinant. In all perception and learning above a simple physiologically conditioned response, the three factors interpenetrate to form a "configured" or organized perceptual experience. In any learning, accordingly, which rises above the level of complexity of rat behavior at a choice point in a maze, the three determinants interact to form a cognitive whole. We see the world not only through our own eyes but through the eyes of others and largely in conformity with the customs of our group.

Our concern here, however, is not only with the problem of complexity and the interrelations of the three determinants. Of equal importance is that learning a given experience is psychologically different for different individuals. Every person interprets a stimulus situation not only in accordance with its objective character, but also through the crucible of his own personality and temperament and the directive force of his culture.<sup>22</sup> The objective stimulus situation, in brief, is perceived differently by different individuals.

**The Essentials of Social Learning.** There is no subject matter in psychology which is more energetically pursued than learning, and few subjects regarding which there is more divergence among competent investigators. Fortunately it is not necessary for us to take part in the controversy, for few of the theories have direct relevance to social learning. Of these the theory of Miller and Dollard is, despite its fractionated character, most adequate for our purpose, and we shall present its essentials in this section.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A similar point of view has been developed by a number of contemporary students of personality. In this connection see particularly the following: K. Lewin, *Dynamic Theory of Personality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935), chap. iii, and R. B. MacLeod, "The Phenomenological Approach to Social Psychology," *Psychol. Rev.*, 54 (1947), 193-210.

<sup>23</sup> See Miller and Dollard, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 13-53.



Learning takes place by means of four related factors, namely, drive, cue, response, and reward. A *drive* is a stimulus to action. Hunger, for example, impels the infant to cry or to make his need known in some other way. When there is no drive the infant does not behave as a hungry organism and therefore he does not learn. A *cue* determines the condition and the selection of the response which the child will make. Thus the mother's breast, her cooing words, or the odor of her milk determine the readiness or "set" of the child and the direction of his incipient movements. Without cues he cannot anticipate the source of his satisfaction and so he cannot learn. Cues alone, however, cannot result in learning. The child must *respond* to the cues, for unless he responds he will not learn. Thus, the mother will touch the child's mouth with her breast or turn his head in the proper direction. These efforts on her part are attempts to arouse response in the child. The responses will occur, finally, if they are also *rewarded*, for in the absence of reward the responses will not be made, and certainly will not be repeated. Acts which reduce drives or tensions are learned because reduction of tension is pleasant. The attainment of pleasure is a reward, and hence the child will repeat his response because of an anticipated reward.

**Reinforcement** A question which sooner or later must be faced by the social psychologist when he studies the role of learning in personality formation has been posed by experimental investigation. Psychologists working under controlled laboratory conditions have found that learned responses tend to drop out unless they are constantly reinforced. Therefore, for all practical purposes we can say that unless a response is reinforced—that is, given satisfaction through reward—learning does not actually take place. Reward has the effect of stamping the response into the reaction system, and continued reward will increase the reinforcement of an acquired habit. Punishment, on the other hand, causes the original response to disappear or to be held in abeyance. Earlier psychologists, following Thorndike, called this principle the "law of effect."<sup>24</sup>

The operation of the principle of reinforcement is readily seen in the learning process of the child. Because of his dependence on adults, the child, in order to gain security from his parents, will engage in some acts and refrain from others to gain their approval. In either case the child, by virtue of the reinforcement made possible by reward, will tend to perform

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<sup>24</sup> This "law" as earlier formulated attributed considerable learning value to punishment. Thorndike himself, however, as well as others, has thrown considerable doubt on the complete validity of this law. Experiments show that generally punishment is not a dependable stimulus for learning. See P. T. Young, *Motivation of Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1936).



the correct response, i.e., the socially desirable and socially approved one. Each reinforcement, in other words, increases the probability of its recurrence on later occasions.

In view of the experimental findings that learned responses tend to drop out unless they are constantly enforced, one is led to question whether the probability of recurrence on later occasions will increase. Furthermore, in view of these findings, why does not the child's learned behavior disappear when he is removed from the socializing atmosphere of the home? Why do not adults forget their conditioned responses when they are no longer rewarded for them?

Stagner believes that the correct answer to these questions has been given by Mowrer, and we are inclined to agree.<sup>25</sup> Mowrer's explanation is as follows: After a few repetitions of painful experiences, or punishments, the associated stimuli become freighted with unpleasant feelings. The reaction to the unpleasant experience gives rise to anxiety. Anxiety will cause a person to act in accordance with the expectations of others, and the relief from anxiety resulting from this behavior constitutes a reward for him. Thus, the reinforcement of learned behavior lies not in associated punishment but in the *reward* resulting from the relief from anxiety.

*Conclusion.* We have now reviewed the bare essentials of simple social learning. Learning is a fundamental process in all behavior.

Social learning is the process through which the individual is conditioned to behave in certain ways. The psychologist has traditionally emphasized the *processual* nature of learning, and has concentrated chiefly on the types of learning phenomena we have discussed in this section. The sociologist has almost exclusively concentrated on the materials of social learning—on customs, folkways, institutions, inventions, etc. Yet, insofar as the sociologist has also been concerned with the role of these factors in shaping human personality, he has not neglected learning as a process.

Both disciplines deal with the same problem but look at it from a slightly different perspective and employ a different language. Thus, what the psychologist calls "learning," the sociologist calls variously "socialization," "assimilation," or "acculturation." From the standpoint of social psychology as expounded in this book, these phenomena are described by the broad term "socialization of the individual," wherein social learning as conceived by the psychologist and "enculturation" as conceived by the ethnologist are interacting and intermingling social-psychological processes.

<sup>25</sup> R. Stagner, *Psychology of Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 5.



## Socialization of the Individual: Enculturation

Let us repeat a frequent observation. The human child is born into and acquires a personality in a specific social environment. In this environment he learns a language, acquires approved forms of conduct, and attains some degree of adjustment to others. In this process of learning his behavior is continually reinforced, particularly by the values of the family and the mores of the community. Almost at every turn his behavior is formed and modified by the social influences around him. Bearing in mind the *process* of social learning as we have described it, we can now proceed to examine more specifically some of the most important social pressures which mold the biological infant into an enculturated person.

Despite the transfer of many socializing functions from the home to other institutions, the family is still the most important conditioning agency in the life of the child. Although the processes which we shall discuss in this section are processes of social learning in which conditioning plays a major role in habit building, the exact mechanisms involved are frequently obscure. We shall utilize the insights of psychoanalytical theory to aid us in studying the early learning or socializing process in the child.

**Fixation on the Mother.** The term *fixation* is sometimes used to denote the arrest of pleasure-seeking at an infantile stage, but we are using the word in a different sense in our description of infantile socialization. Under normal conditions in our society the most important person in the infant's environment is his mother. She ministers to his needs and in so doing becomes his chief source of pleasure. Because the reward of pleasure has become linked with her presence and her behavior, the child responds positively to his mother. She becomes an object of fixation. Fixation is a process of learning which can be described in the same manner as other forms of learning, namely, in the language of drive, cue, response, and reward. The pleasure which the response evokes in the child is his reward, and repetition tends to facilitate the same act on future occasions. The end process of this fixation is reduction of drive or tension. Having once learned that pleasure-reward derives from his mother, the latter becomes the stimulus for responses in the same direction. She becomes an object of psychological fixation.

**Differentiation from the Mother.** While the satisfaction of the child's needs results from his response to his mother's ministrations, many of his impulses are also frustrated by her. She must discipline him for the sake of his psychological growth and in order to satisfy the demands of society. These disciplines exist in different forms in every society. Among the earliest of these blockages of the child's self-seeking



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impulses is weaning. The pleasure which he once derived from his mother through feeding must now be surrendered, gradually or abruptly, depending upon the practices of the group. Various other disciplines are imposed upon him, thus further directing his attention away from his mother. As his area of interaction expands, his responses to others increase in number, variety, and intensity. The attitudes and behavior of others condition his own responses, and he gradually makes their behavior his own.<sup>26</sup> Although a child hardly possesses an organized system of attitudes and values, nevertheless an incipient life organization (an individual's conception of himself, his relation to others, and the norms of his group) is laid down in his interactions with members of the family. The process of differentiation from the mother, and from other members of the family later, is the beginning of the course of emancipation from parental dominance which is essential if the child is to achieve independence and full maturity.

**The Basic Disciplines.** There is no known human society without a set of rules or techniques by means of which the child's impulses are channelized along prescribed patterns. Because of their universality we shall call them the *basic disciplines*. These disciplines are four in number: oral, anal, urethral, and genital.

**Oral disciplines.** Although it is extremely artificial to separate the physiological from the psychological processes, our concern is not with the oral functions of the child *as such*, but with the manner in which they are controlled by adults, and with the effect of this control upon the growing child. The oral disciplines are those which in one way or another involve need-satisfaction and later adjustment by way of the mouth.

The most obvious oral activity of the infant is nursing. In the early weeks of his life it is practically his only means of satisfaction. He enjoys the sensation of the nipple in his mouth, the act of sucking, and the flow of warm milk into his mouth. He thrives psychologically on the warmth and security of his contact with his mother at the same time. It has been noted by many pediatricians and psychiatrists that infants left alone too much do not thrive.<sup>27</sup> It is an increasing practice with American mothers to feed their babies with bottles. While no one is prepared to appraise the full effects of this practice upon the psychological growth of the child, it may deprive him of a very important satisfaction—the feeling of security.

The Zuñi Indians, on the other hand, breast-feed their babies long and

<sup>26</sup> See A. Gesell, *The Mental Growth of the Pre-School Child* (New York: Macmillan, 1925).

<sup>27</sup> O. S. English and G. H. J. Pearson, *Emotional Problems of Living* (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 22.



tenderly. They are well-known for their gentle and unaggressive relations with one another and for their strong feelings of security. Although the development of these traits is aided by other factors in Zuñi society, such as common ownership of land and the custom of every woman being "mother" to every child, it is not implausible to suppose that tender maternal breast-feeding plays an important role.

Compared with the Zuñis, the Marquesans are singularly cold and unfeeling in their oral disciplines. Breast-feeding is not practiced, for the mores of the community require the woman to cultivate her breasts as erotic objects for the men. Instead of experiencing a warm psychophysical relation with his mother, the Marquesan child feels neglected. His hunger needs, furthermore, are satisfied by having his mouth stuffed with a kind of porridge until he sputters and chokes. Eating is thus at once a physiologically satisfying and an anxiety-ridden experience.<sup>28</sup>

The term *oral discipline* does not refer exclusively to the pleasures or frustrations associated with eating as such. It includes anything associated with this act, such as manner of eating or etiquette, likes and dislikes of foods, regularity of eating, etc. Thus, the rule of one society requires that an individual show his appreciation of a meal by smacking his lips, while in our own culture that would be thought boorish and crude. The oral discipline also includes speech, especially the process of teaching a child words, how they are to be pronounced, the kinds that are proper and those which are "not nice."

*Anal disciplines.* An organism that ingests food also eliminates the waste products that accumulate in its digestion and assimilation. Since even under the most primitive hygienic conditions men find it necessary to dispose of their excreta, every society has established rules governing men's anal behavior. In American society, these rules are learned through what is ordinarily termed "toilet training."

The manner in which sphincter control is practiced, the age at which it is initiated, and the parents' attitude toward the child's progress in anal sanitation have important consequences for his personality development. If the child were guided solely by his own comfort he would persist in emptying his bowels under any circumstances if the need existed. As a member of a group which has definite attitudes on the matter and which operates regulations regarding it, the child has to submit to the anal dis-

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<sup>28</sup> These societies are well described by Ralph Linton and psychologically analyzed by Abram Kardiner. See A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).



cipline. Meeting the demands for bowel control is one of the child's most difficult problems, and may easily lead to resentment and anxiety. With the beginning of toilet training the child is confronted by a drastically new situation; it is unlike the period of irresponsibility when he could achieve intestinal comfort freely. As English and Pearson describe the child's situation: "Now, instead of being the receiver, he is asked to begin to be the giver. Now, instead of being contributed to, he is asked to make a contribution. Now, instead of being in a position of irresponsibility, he is asked to assume a responsibility in relation to himself."<sup>29</sup>

General observation by specialists indicates that most parents in American society are somewhat premature in beginning a child's toilet training. These authorities hold that the training should not be begun very much before the child is a year old. This position is based on sound neurophysiological evidence. Careful study has shown that the tracts of the spinal cord are not fully myelinated until the end of the child's first year.<sup>30</sup> For this reason he cannot exercise bowel control too well before this time.

The effects of toilet training on the personality of the individual may lead either to adequate adjustment or to neurotic attitudes, depending considerably on the techniques employed by the parents and their attitudes toward the excretory process. Let us first consider the necessity of correct techniques. If the mother responds to the child's lapses with impatience or punishment, he will associate fear and anxiety with elimination. Persistence in this behavior on the parent's part may result in resentment on the part of the child. Obviously, none of these feelings should be permitted to become associated in the child's mind with an activity that is at once normal and pleasant. If training is begun too early, failures are inevitable. Even at best, bowel control develops slowly. This fact may be utilized by the parent to establish an important conception in the child's learning. If the parent is patient and sympathetic, the child has the time required to learn that his present control will result in future reward in the form of affection and approval. As English and Pearson point out, the child has time in which to learn that self-control will lead to the best results in the long run. He develops the "reality principle," as the Freudians call it, whereby an individual postpones an immediate pleasure for a future reward. In the absence of the

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<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. The term *myelinated* describes the condition in which axons, or nerve fibers, are coated with a white fatty substance, called *myelin*. Until the tracts of the spinal cord are encased in myelin, neurological pathways are not developed, and maturation of response cannot take place.



reality principle a child does not develop into a mature adult. A parent who muffs the opportunity during toilet training of letting the child acquire the reality principle will deprive him of one of the most important principles for achieving a mature personality.

Let us now consider the importance of wholesome parental attitudes toward the excretory process. Too many people in American society have unwholesome attitudes toward anal activities. Most universal are attitudes of shame and disgust. These attitudes are usually rationalized into the belief that shame and disgust concerning toilet habits are manifestations of moral character and refinement. In the presence of these parental attitudes, he is a rare child who escapes their undesirable effects on his personality.

*Urethral disciplines.* These disciplines concern bladder control.

Since they are a form of toilet training, most of our observations on anal control apply substantially to the control of the urine. There are, however, some differences between these two disciplines in the time factor and in the attitude of adults toward them. Urethral control is achieved more slowly. Normally the child may not stay dry, especially at night, until the end of the third year. It is not uncommon for him to wet the bed occasionally even after this age.<sup>31</sup>

A second difference is the attitude of adults toward bladder control. Generally speaking, most adults who are engaged in child rearing are less distressed by urethral incontinence. It entails less trouble and is less offensive. They are also less embarrassed and self-conscious regarding urethral functions. This is especially evident in some cultures. For instance, it is not unusual in some European peasant villages to see children, and occasionally adults, urinating behind a tree.

*Genital disciplines.* There is no other natural function more thoroughly surrounded by taboos, superstition, shame, guilt, and anxiety than the sexual function. An individual's attitudes toward the sexual functions, like his other attitudes, are derived from his group. Like sexual practices themselves, they are a part of the social heritage into which a person is born.

It is now generally recognized by students of human relations that sexuality exists in young children. This sexuality does not exist in the form of sexual desire, but as a part of the larger complex of pleasurable experience. The infant soon discovers that when certain areas of his body are stimulated

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<sup>31</sup> The reader should not confuse such lapses of the normal child with *enuresis*. The latter is a disturbance of urinary function, and occurs in a child who has already been toilet trained. It is invariably a sign of maladjustment.



he experiences pleasure. Once a conditioned response is established he will "seek" to repeat the experience and a habit is thus set up. If his pleasurable response was attained by means of genital manipulation, he will indulge in sexual play on later occasions.

Now this natural behavior, commonly called masturbation, which frightens and disgusts so many people, is a universal and normal phenomenon. It is, indeed, more than that. Authoritative opinion among psychologists and psychiatrists holds that it is necessary to a satisfactory psychosexual development.<sup>32</sup> According to Kardiner, the evidence suggests that sexual activity compatible with childhood aids the development of the individual.<sup>33</sup> Interference with sexual development, he adds, creates excessive dependence upon others, inflates the parental image, and encourages secondary outlets for the repressed hostility to the interfering parent.<sup>34</sup> To those people who entertain grave fears of the harmful consequences of masturbation, the answer is that there are no harmful physical or mental effects from masturbation. Those effects which are alleged to be harmful stem from a confusion: bad consequences come only from *mental conflict* which a guilty conscience engenders. Remove the guilty conscience by correct information and a sympathetic acceptance of the child's normal sexual strivings, and the mental conflict will vanish.

Because of the great importance of their work for the adequate socialization of the sexual impulse, we shall quote at length from English and Pearson on the subject of masturbation:

Masturbation has at least two important aspects. In order to function sexually men and women need to have some feeling developed in the genital area. Masturbation is an aid in bringing feeling to that area and centering it in the sexual organs. Children who have been made to feel ashamed of the sexual desire that leads to masturbation and who have been afraid of sexual feeling by having been threatened about injury will as a result repress and dam back upon themselves this feeling. By punishment and threat of injury for the practice of masturbation, the parent runs the risk that the grown woman will be frigid and the grown man impotent. The anxiety engendered in these frightened people becomes a barrier to the process of psychosexual development and hinders the process of the libido's becoming genitalized.

Furthermore, impotent men are a threat to the whole race, for if enough men become impotent, the race could not be carried on. Frigid women can, of course,

<sup>32</sup> English and Pearson, *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Kardiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-29.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.



have sexual relations and become pregnant, yet it is important for the race that they not be frigid. When women become frigid and do not allow themselves to have sexual feeling, there is a danger that they will be unhappy in marriage, or fail to have warm feelings toward their children, or both. They are also more prone to develop neurosis and psychosis; they have less to contribute emotionally to marriage and their whole joy of living is reduced.<sup>35</sup>

The course which sexual activity takes and the effect it has upon the maturing child are significantly determined by the sexual mores of the family and the community. If parents, by virtue of their own cultural conditioning, look upon sexual activity as obscene, their children will reflect the same attitude. If parents look upon the sexual activity of their children as dangerous and wicked, their children will develop attitudes of unworthiness and inferiority, attitudes which so often lead to serious maladjustment. It should be pointed out here that in our society one of the most frequent delusions of mental patients is that they have committed an "unpardonable sin," that they have injured their health permanently by masturbation.

The four types of disciplines which we have reviewed are interrelated. For this reason there is generally a fair degree of consistency in parental attitudes regarding each. A mother who nurses her baby in a "cold" and impersonal way—something to be gotten over as fast as possible—will very likely be impatient with her child's toilet habits and be shocked and distressed by his sexual interests and activities. In turn, the child who was frustrated in his nursing pleasures will likely be overconcerned about his toilet activities and anxious about his sexual impulses. The four disciplines are related, moreover, in that all of them possess a strong sensual component: *pleasure* is their basic psychological link. The parent who can in a tender and sympathetic manner help her child step by step to gratify his pleasure needs will in all probability aid her child to develop naturally, gracefully, and with economy of psychic expenditures, into a happy and well-integrated adult.

**Ambivalence.** While the parents, particularly the mother, furnish the child with pleasurable activities, their need to control his activities in the interests of adequate socialization results in many frustrations for the child. Frustration often leads to resentment and hostility toward the frustrating individual. When the mother weans her child, compels him to control his bowel and urethral activities, and restrains him in his sexual explorations, she cannot escape arousing unpleasant feelings and responses in him. Thus the mother both facilitates and inhibits the child's

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<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 84-85. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.



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effort to satisfy his wants or release his tensions. She makes possible both pleasure and displeasure for the child. The child responds to this dual character of her behavior toward him by liking her and resenting her interference at the same time. This psychological duality is technically called *ambivalence*.

Ambivalence is important, as Kimball Young makes clear, for two reasons. First, it tends to split the child's image of each of his parents, especially the mother, into two aspects, a source of wish-fulfillment and a barrier to his satisfaction. Second, it divides his world into two parts, the area of the suppressed and inhibited, and the area of the approved and rewarded.<sup>36</sup> Much of the resentment that a child harbors toward his parents has its inception in these early frustrations. The submissiveness of some children—and adults—can be traced to the same source. Instead of openly rebelling against their parents, some children will, either through fear of retaliation, of loss of love, or out of an awareness of the value of the line of least resistance, accede to their parents' wishes. The conflict is not thereby resolved, however, and the ambivalence may continue through life. Since it is in the best interest of the child and of society that ambivalence be kept at a minimum, it is important that parents sympathetically aid the child in achieving the maximum of integration and emotional satisfaction of his deepest wishes. Although conflicts are, in the very nature of human relations, impossible wholly to escape, their number can be progressively reduced. Parental training suffused with affective tenderness toward the child can go a long way toward bringing about inner harmony and interpersonal concord. An integrated adult is a person who has resolved or outgrown his early ambivalence. But this resolution could hardly have been achieved without the help of understanding and well-adjusted parents.

Our presentation of the subject of socialization in the family, particularly as it refers to the basic disciplines, shows that the restrictive or coercive techniques commonly used in child rearing are psychologically unsound. By their use parents forcefully direct the child's impulses into preconceived patterns and modes of behavior. This is harmful because it violates an important psychological principle, namely, that discipline must be synchronized with the child's ability and maturity. The mother who punishes her one-year-old child for soiling himself clearly violates this principle. Psychologically sound training is purposive; it intelligently utilizes the skills and social controls which will safeguard the child's interests and aid him to achieve security and a steady growth into full maturity.

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<sup>36</sup> K. Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-349; 2nd edition, pp. 354-355.



**Learning the Social Heritage.** The basic disciplines are aspects of the social heritage. We studied them separately because of their crucial role in the early socialization of the child. We shall now consider those aspects of group life which are wider in scope and more variable in their effect upon the developing individual. Their effect upon the individual is felt later than those of the basic disciplines, except insofar as the parents unavoidably impress them on the child when they teach him the basic disciplines.

The social heritage, or culture, of a group consists of the totality of the ways of doing things. These ways of doing things are incorporated, through the process of social learning, into the action-system of an individual in the form of attitudes and habits. In this way an individual comes to think and act in accordance with the customs of the more inclusive group, just as he learned, by way of early conditioning, to act in accordance with the disciplines operating in his family, a more restricted group. We shall review here five means by which society regulates the conduct of its members: folkways, mores, ritual and ceremony, social sanction, and collective representations.

**Folkways.** These are basic to all social life. Sumner summed up their place in life when he said: "The life of society consists of making folkways and applying them."<sup>37</sup> Folkways normally arise in response to frequent repetition of some unimportant act. They may be said to be "group habits." In contrast to individual habits, which resolve with the death of a person, folkways are transmitted to the next generation, where they serve as guides to the conduct of those initiated into them. In contemporary impersonal society, where wide latitudes of permissive behavior exist, folkways have a relatively small degree of influence on behavior. Thus, it is largely a matter of indifference whether a man on passing a woman of slight acquaintance on the street tips his hat to her. In some societies the rules of etiquette are more strictly enforced. In Sumatra, for instance, it is a serious breach of etiquette to mention one's own name; and in some isolated rural regions of China husband and wife must not be seen talking together.

**Mores.** When the violation of certain folkways is thought to be a danger to the group's existence, those folkways become mores.

Mores are rationalized folkways, customs around which ethical generalizations are established. As such they imply moral valuations as to the rightness or wrongness of specific acts. Their transgression carries the

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<sup>37</sup> W. G. Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston: Ginn, 1906), p. 34.



strong likelihood of punishment to the doer. Although they are rationalized folkways they are not rational. One cannot reason with them, for they are final authorities which one obeys almost automatically. Because of their moral character they are frequently incorporated in religious teachings. Thus by virtue of the social pressure and the religious support behind them they assume a position of considerable force as regulators of human conduct.

Because mores are final authorities, they make for extreme rigidity of social behavior. Not infrequently they demand behavior which is obviously contrary to the best interests of the individual and therefore of the group. As Sumner's well-known observation described them, the mores can make anything right or wrong. Thus, in one society men will disfigure their faces by puncturing their noses, or inflict permanent scars on their bodies. In another society the bereaved sons will fill their mouths with the putrefaction of their dead fathers, suffering extreme nausea and vomiting while they are performing the ceremony.<sup>38</sup> The former practice in certain sections of Chinese society of binding the toes of female babies to keep their feet small and dainty is well known. "It is a peculiarity of culture," as Ogburn and Nimkoff remark, "that it can impose, via the mores, violences to biologically healthy activities."<sup>39</sup> In our own society the sexual mores may be such that, as we saw in discussing the sexual functions, the genital training of an infant can wreak havoc with his emotional life.

Lest the reader be too impressed by the negative aspects of the mores—the taboos or "don'ts" of conduct—it must be stressed that they have also a very positive and constructive value. They are a potent force in producing social solidarity and social order. They make for regularity and consistency in behavior and set up models of conduct for the rising generation. When they do not crystallize into inflexible rules—and the rapidity of cultural change in contemporary society safeguards their so doing—they serve as important instruments of individual and social control. They constitute expectancies in interpersonal relations and thereby make human adjustments more easily attainable.

*Ritual and ceremony.* The strength of some mores is fortified in every society through ritual and ceremony. Although some sociologists distinguish between them, these practices are largely inseparable.

<sup>38</sup> This is a religious ceremonial among the people of the Trobriand Islands. See B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in Northwestern Melanesia* (New York: Liveright, 1929), p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> W. F. Ogburn and M. F. Nimkoff, *Sociology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), p. 58.



able. Ritual is a form of behavior in which an act is repeated without variation. Because variation is not permitted, and because the repetitive behavior is highly rhythmical, ritual has a strong emotional appeal. Because of its rhythmical nature every participant can anticipate the act of other participants; this participation creates a high degree of uniformity and rapport in the behavior of all. The rhythm, rapport, and absolute rightness of ritual lends to an act a degree of solemnity which it does not itself possess. Thus the ritual of a lodge or fraternity, while in itself simple or even trivial, is imbued with dignity by the solemn and uncritical sameness of the repeated act. For the time being each person is aroused to an attitude of reverence and respect. The rituals of church services and court proceedings are even more effective in impressing upon the individual the rightness of certain practices and beliefs.

A ritual is one kind of ceremony, suggesting that the latter term is a more inclusive one. Ceremony is said to differ from ritual in that it need not have a repetitive or rhythmic quality. The psychological consequences of the two, however, are identical. Like the ritual, the ceremony solemnizes an act and so serves to give it dignity and importance. Thus a marriage ceremony elevates a familiar act to a level of solemnity and respect which it does not ordinarily possess. It impresses upon the participants, especially the bride and the groom, the seriousness of their undertaking and the sacredness of their vows to each other. Many people, particularly women, could not countenance marriage without a solemn—sometimes even an elaborate and expensive—ceremony.

*Social sanctions.* The folkways and mores are standards established by a group to regulate the conduct of its members. Because they are normative, they can be ignored or transgressed. Because they are thus subject to violation, they carry *sanctions* which aim to forestall or punish disobedience. Social sanctions are the rewards or punishments which a group metes out to those who conform to or violate its codes. More specifically, a positive sanction carries reward to the doer; a negative sanction imposes punishment upon the transgressor.

*Collective representations.* Harmony in social relationships is brought about in part by *collective representations*, as Durkheim, who first employed this term, called them.<sup>40</sup> These collective representations are symbolic expressions of the interests and values which members of a group hold in common. They accentuate and often dramatize the

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<sup>40</sup> E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Eng. trans. (New York: Macmillan, 1915).



common characteristics and thereby indirectly subordinate the individual differences of people in groups. By causing people to be aware of their common social heritage, collective representations help to maintain existing codes and to intensify social solidarity. Familiar examples of collective representations are such symbols as a national flag and the crucified Jesus.

## Conclusion

The process of socialization is long and complicated. It begins at birth and ends at death. From its inception to its end, man is subject to the molding force of the group of which he is a part. As long as he is in interaction with others, he must at every turn adjust himself to their behavior. Social interaction is the condition and the end product of group living. Through imitation, suggestion, and sympathy man becomes like others; through consensus, man wills what others will, and in thus willing he finds his security and individuality.

The analysis of social interaction invariably leads one to an examination of the learning process. As students of social psychology we have a special interest in social learning, for this is the process whereby the individual is conditioned to respond in certain ways, the process by which the social world becomes interiorized in the action-system of the individual. The content of social learning consists of the body of ideas, values, and customs which we call culture. When we want to define learning by what is learned, we call the process enculturation, the assimilation by the individual of the customs and traditions of his group.

Of the groups that mold man's personality we have singled out the family for special consideration. The psychological structure of the family is such that members closely identify themselves with one another, so that the fortunes and misfortunes of one become the intimate concern of all. It is in the family that the individual learns the basic disciplines, and the manner in which he learns them determines the development of his personality. While we come into the world with fundamental biological mechanisms of behavior, the direction our behavior will take and the meaning it will have are determined by the family and by other, larger groups.



## CHAPTER 5 :

# The Self and Its Involvements

IN THEIR RECENT BOOK on ego-involvements Sherif and Cantril write: "Ego formation is not a mystic process. It can be readily detected in the behavior of the growing child."<sup>1</sup> Yet scarcely more than twenty years ago the ego, or self, was considered a mystical subject by many students of human behavior. However, in the early developments of psychology, particularly in the works of James, Baldwin, and Dewey, the concept of the self was of critical importance. The psychoanalysts have used the term almost from the beginning of their discipline. The contributions of Cooley at the turn of the twentieth century, and of Mead somewhat later, included significant studies of the self. Then, in the second and third

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<sup>1</sup> M. Sherif and H. Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (New York: Wiley, 1947), p. 157.



decades of this century the behaviorism of John B. Watson, which was formulated about 1913, dominated the thinking of most American psychologists. Watson viewed psychology as a science of "animal" behavior and therefore found the self a "mentalistic" concept too "subjective" for scientific consideration.<sup>2</sup>

Since approximately 1930, interest has once more been focused on the subject of the self; and today it is not only respected in psychological circles but has become a problem of fundamental theoretical and practical importance.<sup>3</sup> Although a number of forces have been at work in reviving interest in the concept of the self, considerable credit for it belongs to two Gestalt psychologists, Koffka and Lewin, and to Allport, Sherif, and Cantril.<sup>4</sup> The views of these scientists pervade our analysis of the self.

### The Rise of the Self

Although social psychologists frequently describe the self as the "core" of personality, as if it were something deeply imbedded yet clearly definable—like the pit in the cherry—the self is a product of, or is related to, socialized human behavior. It is a product of socialized behavior in that the self arises only in interaction with others in a human group. In this development the primary group, more particularly the family, plays a momentous part. The self is related to the process of socialization, the process whereby the biological individual develops reactions not only toward others but also toward himself and the norms of his group. Through the socializing process organic drives are channelized into adult motives, and so the problem of the self is intimately tied up with the problem of human motivation, a topic which we shall examine in Chapter 6. The experience of selfhood, moreover, is related to attitudes, for, as we shall see

<sup>2</sup> At the threshold of his career Watson wrote: "Throughout the preparation of this elementary text I have tried to write with the human animal before me." J. B. Watson, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist* (New York: Lippincott, 1919), "Preface," p. xi.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that, in addition to the growing literature on the self, the addresses of two recent presidents of the American Psychological Association were devoted to the subject. See C. R. Rogers, "Some Observations on the Organization of Personality," *Amer. Psychologist*, 2 (1947), 358–368; E. R. Hilgard, "Human Motives and the Concept of the Self," *Amer. Psychologist*, 4 (1949), 374–382.

<sup>4</sup> K. Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935); K. Lewin, *Dynamic Theory of Personality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935); G. W. Allport, "The Ego in Contemporary Psychology," *Psychol. Rev.*, 50 (1943), 451–478; Sherif and Cantril, *op. cit.*



in Chapter 7, self-attitudes are an important kind of psychological frame of reference in that they encompass also our attitudes toward others and toward the institutions and the norms of the group. This chapter on the self, while important in its own right, carries our study of personality from what has preceded to the chapters yet to follow.

**The Emergence of the Self.** Because the word *self* is most commonly used as a substantive, as something betokening a fixed existence, it is easy to assume that it belongs to man as a possession. Thus, when a child of two is asked, "Where is Billy," he may point to his abdomen and answer, "Billy." When a group of boys is asked, "Who broke the window?" the guilty person may punch his chest with his forefinger repeatedly and shout, "I did it!" The sense of self is intimate; it is *my* self.

The self is, nevertheless, a set of experiences and attitudes which, like personality as a whole, has a history. It comes into being gradually, and normally it is subject to modification with changes in experience. Its development begins on purely visceral, sensory, and perceptual levels. Thus the satisfaction of the hunger drive will achieve pleasure for the child. The pleasure comes to be associated with a general well-being of the body, and in time the infant associates satisfaction with it. There is here a glimmer of differentiation from the surrounding world, a fixation upon the body in a kind of narcissistic attraction. In the act of resolving his visceral tensions the child is aided by others. By a process of conditioning he associates them with his own pleasure, and in due time becomes "aware" of them as co-actors in the total process. But the focus of attention is upon himself, and love of himself is his elemental experience. As Murphy put it, "self-love becomes a norm; self-love is one of the few things about which we can be reasonably sure as we compare the experiences of infancy in varying cultures."<sup>5</sup>

Whether this stage of narcissistic attraction can properly be said to be the beginning of selfhood it is not easy to say. Psychologists seem to be pretty well agreed that infants do not have any conceptions of themselves as individuals. It may well be, as Piaget has remarked, that the infant lives in an "undifferentiated absolute."<sup>6</sup> His detailed researches on the normal judgment of the child lead him to conclude that the younger the child the

<sup>5</sup> G. Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947), p. 484.

<sup>6</sup> J. Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Physical Causality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930), p. 128.



less evidence he displays of having a self.<sup>7</sup> He has found that the infant's relations to his mother or other adults are vague and inconsistent, fluctuating between attraction and repulsion. Because the infant's only desire at this period is the satisfaction of his needs as they arise from moment to moment, Piaget thinks of this stage of development as autism.<sup>8</sup>

Gestalt psychologists seem to agree that at the beginning the infant has no clearly differentiated psychological pattern that can be described as a self. It is their conception, particularly that of Lewin, that the self is a system or configuration, and so requires time to develop. Lewin finds that the child's "I" is not formed earlier than the second or third year.<sup>9</sup>

Charlotte Bühler could find no evidence of any clear psychological formation which might be described as a self. Although she believes that the young infant is too intimately bound up with his mother emotionally and physiologically to have any feeling for self, she feels that our knowledge to date is too inadequate to permit any definite conclusion.<sup>10</sup>

The well-known studies of Gesell and his associates confirm the foregoing observations. They show that at eighteen months a child is still very ego-centric "because he does not perceive other persons as individuals like himself."<sup>11</sup> It is not until the child is about two that the sense of self can be recognized, though not yet sharply. That the beginnings of a "true" self appear at this time is evident in the child's use of the personal pronouns *you, me, and I*.<sup>12</sup>

**The Self and Other Selves.** In the description of the basic disci-

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<sup>7</sup> J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932). See also by the same author *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928), and H. Wallon, *Les Origines du Caractère Chez l'Enfant* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1933).

<sup>8</sup> Piaget, *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*, p. 244. The term *autism* means absorption in phantasy and the inability to distinguish between internal and external reality.

<sup>9</sup> K. Lewin, "Environmental Forces in Child Behavior and Development," in C. Murchison, ed., *Handbook of Child Psychology* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1931), pp. 94-127. See also W. Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Liveright, 1929); K. Koffka, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> C. Bühler, "The Social Behavior of the Child," in C. Murchison, ed., *Handbook of Child Psychology*, chap. ix; Bühler, *From Birth to Maturity* (London: Routledge, 1935).

<sup>11</sup> A. Gesell, et al., *The First Five Years of Life* (New York: Harper, 1940), p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37. See also A. Gesell and F. L. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (New York: Harper, 1943), pp. 334-340.



plines in Chapter 4, we called attention to the role of early frustration, such as that caused by weaning, in differentiating the child from his mother. His feeling of frustration, together with the fact that the mother and others are also associated in his experience with the satisfaction of his needs, enables the child to differentiate himself from them. The sense of self cannot advance beyond self-fixation in the absence of others, for without the latter the child cannot develop comparisons. The self always presupposes the not-self or the self of another. This is but another way of saying that the self can arise only in social experience. The satisfaction of the child's needs—the reduction of visceral tensions and the like—is thus basic to the development of a self in the sense that it is in itself *social*.

This is, however, a superficial explanation of the development of the self. The growth of the self consists too in the ability of the individual to be an object to himself. Mead points out that the self can be both subject and object.<sup>13</sup> As we saw in our analysis of language and behavior, the individual becomes an object to himself only in communication with others, when he takes their attitudes toward himself. At first this takes place largely in the form of simple gestures, such as the child's "imitating" his own sounds and the sounds of those in his immediate surroundings. As he observes and responds to his mother and others, they become objects to him—objects who give pleasure, security, frustration, etc. In time he takes on their attitudes and responses toward him and makes them his own. In this process of making their attitudes and responses to him his own he becomes also an object to himself. The individual thus "has" a self because he is implicated in, or is a part of, the conduct of others. Mead describes the situation thus:

... it is where one does respond to that which he addresses to another and where that response of his own becomes a part of his conduct, where he not only hears himself but responds to himself, talks and replies to himself as truly as the other person replies to him, that we have behavior in which the individuals become objects to themselves.<sup>14</sup>

The role of language is here once more in evidence. In linguistic communication, as we demonstrated earlier, the individual arouses a response in himself and in turn replies to this response. The stimuli in this process affect the individual speaking as they affect those who are addressed. A speaker is always affected by his own words in a manner similar to the way they affect others. Again, as Mead points out, with particular reference to

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<sup>13</sup> G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 135-144.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139. Reprinted by permission by University of Chicago Press.



the place of symbols in thinking, thinking always implies a symbol which initiates the same response in another that it calls out in the thinker.<sup>15</sup> The symbols used in thinking and conduct have a certain degree of universality to people in the same situation. As Mead points out, no person can utter anything that is absolutely particular, for every particular is an integral part of a larger experience. It is this universality of symbols within a common social act that makes it possible for them to mean the same thing to different people. "A person who is saying something is saying to himself what he says to others; otherwise he does not know what he is talking about."<sup>16</sup>

Apart from this social capacity of symbol self-and-other response, the growth of the self cannot take place. But apart from the ability of a stimulus to affect the individual as it affects another, language as an organized set of symbols also cannot arise. Self and symbolic stimulation-and-response are inseparable. Mead makes this clear in reference to Helen Keller's experience. In Miss Keller's case a contactual experience which she could give to another as it was given to herself was indispensable in the growth of her self. Not until she was able to communicate with others by means of symbols which would produce in herself the responses which they aroused in others could she acquire a self.<sup>17</sup>

#### Role-perception and the Self.

As we have said, the growth of the self consists in part in the capacity of the individual to be an object to himself. The child begins to develop this capacity by assuming his mother's bodily gestures, words, tone of voice, etc.—by introjecting the role of his mother. Mead calls this act of introjection role-taking. He illustrates the process by contrasting the play of dogs and the play of a child. Two dogs playing with each other will act as if they were fighting; each adjusts his behavior to the oncoming act of the other. They will growl, bark, and simulate biting. If the process were carried through, they would engage in actual fighting. We must take note of the fact that there are *two* animals adjusting to each other in the dogs' play. What distinguishes the play of a child from that of two dogs is that, unlike the two animals stimulating each other to respond in certain ways, a child will *stimulate himself* and *respond to his own stimulation*. The child will act out a role and respond to his own role-acting. The following description and analysis of a child at play brings out the essential nature of his role-taking.

He plays that he is, for instance, offering himself something, and he buys it; he gives a letter to himself and takes it away; he addresses himself as a parent, as a teacher; he arrests himself as a policeman. He has a set of stimuli which call out

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.



in himself the sort of responses they call out in others. He takes this group of responses and organizes them into a certain whole. Such is the simplest form of being another to oneself. It involves a temporal situation. The child says something in one character and responds in another character, and then his responding in another character is a stimulus to himself in the first character, and so the conversation goes on. A certain organized structure arises in him and in his other which replies to it, and these carry on the conversation of gestures between themselves.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to play, an organized game is much more complicated. The roles which a child acts in play are random and unsynchronized. He can pass from one role to another as his fancy may decide. In a game, the roles which he plays have a definite relationship to each other. We may illustrate these facts with Mead's example of the baseball game. A child playing baseball must assume the attitudes or perceive the role of every player in his own role. In order to perform his own role at all, he must be able to perceive or *anticipate* the incipient act of every individual in the game. While he need not perform all of these roles at the same time, he must know what they are and be able to anticipate some of them at every point of the game. Again, the roles must be organized—and the “rules of the game” aid him in so doing—into a unified set of responses. In the absence of organization the child cannot play the game, for he does not know what roles to anticipate from each player. His responses to his own acts and those of others are determined by his being everyone else on the team. Out of this synchronization or organization of the separate roles emerges the set of attitudes of those participating in the game. Mead calls this set of attitudes the *generalized other*. The unity of the individual self, which we shall examine later, lies in this organization of separate roles, or in the generalized other. The emergence of the generalized other marks the realization of the first large phase in the child's growth toward selfhood. Henceforth the growth of the self is marked by expansion, deepening, and enrichment which come from the individual's participation in ever-widening interests and activities within the group.

### Elaborations of the Self

In the preceding paragraph we stated that the attainment of the generalized other marks the consummation of the first phase of the growth of the self. In the first half-dozen years of the child's growth

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150–151. Reprinted by permission of University of Chicago Press.



the basic design of his self is fairly well established. We do not wish to suggest that the development of self consists of definite stages. Rather, the self evolves through a continuous process in which the organization of attitudes, or generalized other, is at first poorly developed. The younger child does not have a generalized other sufficiently developed to play such a complicated game as baseball. But through *continuous* growth, he develops the basic design of his self which was established during the first years.

**The Social Self.** In his interactions with others the child gradually develops an awareness of himself, a *self-image*. This self-image is the result of the child's differentiation of himself from others and of the *attitudes they have toward him*. The conceptions which others have of him and the way they treat him is an integral part of his total self. Cooley calls the self determined by the attitudes of others the "looking-glass self." He says that in his imagination the child acquires, first, an image of himself as he appears to others; he forms an idea, next, of how these others judge him; and finally, he experiences a feeling of pride or mortification, depending on what he imagines they think of him.<sup>19</sup> This looking-glass self is roughly equivalent to James's idea of the "social self"—the images of a person which other people carry in their heads. James adds that since the people who have these images of him fall into different groups, "we may practically say that he has as many different social selves as there are distinct groups of persons about whose opinion he cares."<sup>20</sup>

James goes on further and calls attention to a very important aspect of the social self in contemporary life—the *club opinion*. A person is controlled in his conduct by the identifications he makes with various groups, such as clubs, lodges, college fraternities, and professional societies. The loyalty of the individual to these groups is often a very strong force in his life. Thus the fraternity boy must be a "brother" to every member even though he may have no genuine devotion to any of them. "The thief must not steal from other thieves; and the gambler must pay his gambling debts, even though he may pay no other debts in the world."<sup>21</sup>

The attitudes of others mold our own attitudes toward ourselves and constitute an important aspect of our self-evaluations. The importance of self-evaluation, or of the self-picture, to each of us is shown by James in the following paragraphs:

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<sup>19</sup> C. H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Scribner, 1922), p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> W. James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1890), Vol. I, p. 294.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294–295.



I, who for the time have staked my all on being a psychologist, am mortified if others know much more psychology than I. But I am contented to wallow in the greatest ignorance of Greek. My deficiencies there give me no sense of personal humiliation at all. Had I "pretensions" to be a linguist, it would have been just the reverse. So we have the paradox of a man shamed to death because he is only the second pugilist or the second oarsman in the world. That he is able to beat the whole population of the globe minus one is nothing; he has "pitted" himself to beat that one; and as long as he doesn't do that nothing else counts. He is to his own regard as if he were not, indeed he is not.

Yonder puny fellow, however, whom everyone can beat, suffers no chagrin about it, for he has long ago abandoned the attempt to "carry that line," as the merchants say, of self at all. With no attempt there can be no failure; with no failure no humiliation. So our self-feeling in this world depends entirely on what we *back* ourselves to be and do. It is determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities; a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success. . . . Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator. To give up pretensions is as blessed a relief as to get them gratified. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Contemporary psychoanalysts also recognize a social self. Horney accounts for the origin of neurosis in part by the concept of the social self. Because of the dependence we all have on the opinions of us held by others, we must keep up appearances and play the expected roles in society. So great is this need to keep up appearances that to give up our pretenses is therapeutically a greater relief than having them gratified.<sup>23</sup>

Horney's analysis also lends support to the claim that the social self arises out of the way others treat us. For instance, the child who is compelled at every turn to accede to his parents' expectations, to inhibit every initiative of his own, becomes alienated from people and learns soon to *mistrust* and despise them. Horney describes the effect of others' treatment upon an individual's self in the following paragraph:

The childhood history of a patient with pronounced perfectionistic trends often shows that he had self-righteous parents who exercised unquestioned authoritative sway over the children, an authority that may have referred primarily to standards or primarily to a personal autocratic regime. Often too the child suffered much unfair treatment, such as the parents' preference for other siblings

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 310-311. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc. In this quotation we find not only a keen description of the self-feeling or the looking-glass self, but an anticipation of *Anspruchsniveau* (level of aspiration) of recent Gestalt psychology.

<sup>23</sup> K. Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1939), p. 231.



or reproaches for things for which not he but the parent or another sibling were to blame. Although such unfair treatment may not have exceeded the average, it nevertheless created more than average resentment and indignation, because of the disparity between the actual treatment and the parents' pretense of infallibility. Accusation arising on these grounds could not be expressed because the child was too uncertain of his acceptability.<sup>24</sup>

It is not uncommon for a child treated in this manner to develop attitudes of insecurity and self-devaluation. He is humiliated by his parents' treatment and by his inability to retaliate. As a consequence, his low opinion of himself is increasingly intensified.

**Self-esteem.** Self-esteem is largely the individual's reaction to other people's opinions of himself. While the social self is largely the image which others have of an individual, self-esteem refers to his response to that image. Thus the degree of an individual's self-esteem will depend considerably upon how he evaluates the opinions of him held by others. For example, if he accepts the opinions of those who constantly threaten or criticize him, he will eventually feel unwanted. On the other hand, the degree of an individual's self-esteem determines his evaluation of the opinions of others. If his self-esteem is low, he will even anticipate criticism and feel that others consider him worthless. He will tend to assume that others evaluate him as he evaluates himself.

An individual's self-esteem affects his total behavior. Thus a person who is self-conscious will not only feel ill-at-ease with another but will have a flushed face, a rapid pulse, an awkward posture, and the like.<sup>25</sup> Behavior is crucially affected by a person's self-image, self-perception, or self-esteem. If all the perspectives through which an individual perceives himself are organized into a unified self-picture—if his self-esteem, that is to say, is adequate—he is free of the tensions which a distorted view of the self tends to beget. The student of personality should note this fact carefully, for it calls attention to a very important fact concerning the growth of the self. Although the self is a product of the sociocultural world of the individual, the manner in which he incorporates that world into his perceptual system is a significant factor in his conception of himself. This fact calls attention to the *specific* determinant of the self. While the self arises only in interaction with others in a particular culture, the social self, and more particularly self-

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

<sup>25</sup> G. W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Holt, 1937); P. Eisenberg, "Factors Related to Feelings of Dominance," *J. Consult. Psychol.*, 1 (1937), 89-92.



esteem, is derived from the manner in which the individual perceives his culture and his place in it. Self-esteem, then, is the manner in which the individual perceives himself in his relations to others. When his perception of his relation to others changes he himself changes. Accordingly, the past is seldom the whole, or even the principal, determinant of behavior. The present restructuring of the individual's perception of the total field of him-self-and-others is a crucial factor in his conception of himself.

The recent work of Rogers, as well as the theoretical formulations of Cooley and Mead, bear out the foregoing observation. Rogers's client-centered clinical work has led him to conclude that changes in behavior are determined by changes occurring in the perception of reality and the perception of the self. In therapy these perceptual changes, says Rogers, "are more often concerned with the self than with the external world. Hence we find in therapy that as the perception of self alters, behavior alters."<sup>26</sup> Behavior alters, in other words, as a consequence of present events, not of past conditioning. Behavior also is a total, rather than a segmental, reaction.

A study of people's impressions of an individual can reveal much regarding the complex interrelatedness of self and self-esteem, as shown by the following excerpt:

The secure individual is likely to be described by his friends and neighbors as easy, natural, relaxed, affectionate, and friendly (if they approve of him), or as smug, bovine, unambitious, self-satisfied, easy-going, and lazy (if they disapprove of him). The threatened or insecure person is usually first described by other people as tense and nervous. He is often characterized as suspicious, envious, fearful, unpredictable, unstable, or introspective. Or he may be described as *extremely* pleasant or overbearing. For example, the forced laughter of a threatened individual is different from the relaxed and easy laughter of someone who has confidence in other people's affection for him.<sup>27</sup>

Maslow and Mittelmann's analysis suggests a close relationship between self-esteem and security. Insecurity is a threat to the integrity of the self and is due in part to a distorted perception by an individual of himself and of social reality, and in part to his inability to cope with the latter. Modern civilization generates a great amount of insecurity in its people. Hence

<sup>26</sup> Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 350. For a very perceptive view of the self along somewhat similar lines see D. Snygg and A. W. Combs, *Individual Behavior* (New York: Harper, 1949).

<sup>27</sup> A. H. Maslow and B. Mittelmann, *Principles of Abnormal Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 150. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



## 5 • The Self and Its Involvements

almost everyone today feels some degree of uneasiness, and most people are impelled to build up various defenses. J. S. Plant distinguishes clearly between security and self-esteem. Security, he points out, comes to the individual because of *who* he is, whereas self-esteem comes to him because of what he can *do*. A person feels secure because, let us say, he is his mother's beloved boy; but his self-esteem is due to the fact that he gets good grades in school, makes the football team, and is successful with girls. These things are valued, and he knows that they are valued, by others, for they conform to the expectancies of the group. Security is usually founded on a sense of belongingness. The child who is loved and caressed feels secure, even though his self-esteem, due to inadequacy or a low evaluation by others, may be very low. Conversely, the child who rarely experiences body-embracing responses from others will feel insecure, even though his self-esteem, due to adequacy of intelligence, ability, and success (high social evaluation), may be very high. Security is thus genetically more fundamental; it comes first, whereas success, adequacy, self-esteem come later. The child who knows that somebody loves him can accept more threats to his self-esteem.<sup>28</sup>

*Factors affecting self-esteem.* We have emphasized the social nature of the self and of self-esteem. Without crucial evidence to the contrary from biological research, and in view of a large body of theoretical and empirical evidence of a sociogenic character confirming this stand, we shall have to maintain that self-esteem is fundamentally social. It is acquired from experience, particularly from the attitudes of others toward us. Those who argue for the biogenic nature of self-esteem do so by confusing self-esteem with dominance. A person may have a high degree of self-esteem and yet be submissive; or he may be very dominant and still have a deep sense of personal inadequacy. As a matter of fact, as psycho-analytic research has amply shown, extreme dominance may be a form of compensation for lack of self-esteem.

The earliest determinant of self-esteem, and often the most permanent in its effects, is the attitudes of adults toward the growing infant and child. If adults have a favorable view of him, he has a good chance of developing a favorable self-picture. If people beyond the immediate family have a positively toned attitude toward him, his idea of himself is further enhanced. Similarly, if the view that others have of him is unfavorable, his self-esteem is correspondingly damaged. This negative self-attitude, this

<sup>28</sup> For a good discussion of this problem see J. S. Plant, *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1937), chap. v.



unlovely self-picture may, by the normal process of transference, lead to a cynical view of others. On the other hand, adequate self-esteem is a reasonably good guarantee of confidence in others.

Another factor affecting the degree of self-esteem is emotionally disastrous experiences. Any experience which is construed by the individual as a threat to his self, such as failure or humiliation, affects the stability of the self. The self-esteem of a jilted woman, for example, may be considerably damaged by her experience. Her attitude toward herself also comes to be bound up with her attitude toward all men, so that she may now mistrust and resent them.

Self-attitudes are affected also by the status of the group to which a person belongs. Thus, people who are members of minority groups, especially if these groups are also widely disliked, have their self-esteem affected by this membership. Membership in occupational groups whose status is low, such as those of bartenders and garbage collectors (and occasionally even school teachers!), will affect the self-esteem of individuals.

The great importance of self-esteem to the study of the self and the personality should now be clear. Psychologists and sociologists have long been aware of its role in behavior. Social psychologists should be even more sensitive to its crucial place in the study of human behavior. A knowledge of self-esteem throws light on both normal and maladjusted behavior. It seems that both very high and very low self-esteem affect the individual's adjustments to others adversely. An inflated sense of self-importance suggests a distorted perspective of the individual's status in his group. This distortion begets misunderstanding and conflict in his relations with others. A deflated sense of self-importance leads to the use of neurotic coping mechanisms and a perpetual need to boost a tottering self-image. A degree of self-esteem between these extremes is conducive to better personal and social adjustment.

Self-esteem is an attitude each has toward himself that must be preserved at any cost. While self-enhancement is sought by everyone, the most imperious need is for each to preserve that view of himself which he carries around in his head. Most people of intelligence place their level of aspiration not so far beyond their abilities as to cause failure, nor yet so far below their capacities as to make every achievement a hollow victory. When the sights are set too high and achievement is always only in the offing, bitterness and disillusionment are the most frequent outcomes. If they are set too low, dull dissatisfaction results. Theoretical and experimental work and the observations of countless poets and philosophers underscore the dictum that self-esteem is one of the deepest needs of human nature. At the core of



every personality is what McDougall called the sentiment of self-regard.<sup>29</sup> On the sentiment of self-regard one will stake everything. It knows only one rule and obeys only one command: the weakness of the self must never be exposed. This need to hold one's self-image unsullied by the rude event of exposure often drives men into the most unbelievable paths of self-deception, ranging all the way from excessive egotism, or the simple projection of paranoia, to the boundless grandiosity of schizophrenia.

**Plural Participation and the Self.** In the past few years social psychologists have become more sensitized to the conflicting group identifications and the contradictory roles which men must assume in contemporary society.<sup>30</sup> Sociologists have been conscious of these conflicts and have traced their effects upon the personality for at least a quarter of a century.<sup>31</sup> They have amassed a wealth of materials of group life that has a very direct bearing on the social psychology of the self and of the personality as a whole. We shall consider here one typical problem resulting from the plural participations of the individual. This is the problem of the "marginal man," or "cultural hybrid."<sup>32</sup>

The *cultural hybrid* participates in two or more divergent cultural groups. The act of participation may be viewed from the standpoint of three social-psychological concepts, namely, social distance, identification, and assimilation, each indicating the degree or intensity of a person's group participations.

As we brought out in Chapter 2, the concept of *social distance* was devel-

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<sup>29</sup> W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (Boston: Luce, 1913), chap. vii.

<sup>30</sup> See for example, Sherif and Cantril, *op. cit.*, chap. x; H. Cantril, "The Place of Personality in Social Psychology," *J. Psychol.*, 24 (1947), 19-56.

<sup>31</sup> See the following works of Park and of others: R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, *The City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925); R. E. Park and H. A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925); R. E. Park, "Behind Our Masks," *Survey Graphic*, 56 (1926), 135-139; "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 33 (1928), 881-893; "Personality and Cultural Conflict," *Publ. Amer. Sociol. Soc.*, 25 (1931), 95-110; E. V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man* (New York: Scribner, 1937); I. L. Child, *Italian or American? The Second Generation in Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943); E. C. Hughes, "Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 50 (1945), 353-359.

<sup>32</sup> The term *marginal man* was first employed, to the writer's knowledge, by R. E. Park, who also used the term *cultural hybrid* to designate the same psychological type. Since the term *marginal man* is historically associated with political economy, the term *cultural hybrid* is preferable. See R. E. Park, "Personality and Cultural Conflict," *Publ. Amer. Sociol. Soc.*, 25 (1931), 109; also "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 33 (1928).



oped chiefly by Bogardus.<sup>33</sup> It "measures" the degree of intimacy or remoteness, of acceptance or rejection, in social relations. On the basis of existing data we can say that the cultural hybrid, many of whose social interactions are formal and external, displays a high degree of social distance. On the whole, the greater the marginality of an individual, the greater is the social distance separating him from his group. This is particularly true of the immigrant in America. His relations to the native group are ordinarily distant and reserved. He does not understand or share with the native citizen the latter's attitudes, customs, and traditions. This is but another way of saying that he is unable to participate in any significant degree in the native culture. His awareness of the disparity between his old-world heritage and the culture of the new reminds him of his alien origin, increases his self-consciousness, and heightens his reserve.

In *identification* the individual takes over the ideas, beliefs, and habits of the members of a group and makes them his own. For the cultural hybrid, this involves the partial acceptance of the culture of the group of which he is a new member. We say "partial acceptance," for the immigrant generally can neither acquire it wholly if it is different from his own, nor be entirely accepted by the native group. Identification involves some degree of understanding sympathy for and cooperation with the new group.

The fullest participation is found when the individual experiences a maximum of group identification with a minimum of social distance. When this condition has been attained the individual is said to be culturally assimilated. The immigrant has succeeded—if success of this kind is possible—in bringing his mode of life into harmony with that of the native people. *Assimilation* is thus the final stage in the imperceptible transition from cultural hybridity to cultural fusion. The cultural hybrid, once a divided self, is now an integrated individual.

This integration or full assimilation, if it comes about at all, takes place slowly. Meanwhile the individual lives in two worlds. Some cultural hybrids maintain a high degree of balance in their dual—often plural—participation. There is little or no wavering in this balance, little or no fluctuation from one set of cultural norms to another. The impersonal individual who has repudiated most of his former heritage without wholly accepting the new, and the individual who has accepted the new without rejecting the old, are good examples. These individuals are literally living in two conflicting cultural worlds at the same time. The relationship involved here is such that

<sup>33</sup> E. S. Bogardus, "Social Distance and Its Origins," *J. Appl. Sociol.*, 9 (1925), 216-226; Bogardus, "Social Distance: A Measuring Stick," *Survey Graphic*, 9 (1926):



the individual has acquired enough understanding and sympathy for two conflicting set of norms to enable him to take the point of view of either one toward the other without fully accepting either.<sup>34</sup> In this form of participation the cultural hybrid has achieved a dual identification. Not only has he succeeded in holding a critical attitude toward the culture of his origin without losing his identification with it, but he has been able to reduce the social distance of the native group sufficiently to make his participation in its culture possible. The educated immigrant, the emancipated Jew, and the detached intellectual of any race or nationality illustrate this form of participation. Park describes the dual relations of the Jew as follows:

When . . . the Jew was permitted to participate in the cultural life of the people among whom he lived, there appeared a new type of personality, namely, the cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his traditions, and not quite accepted, because of racial prejudice, in the new society in which he now sought to find a place. He was a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which never completely interpenetrated and fused. The emancipated Jew was, and is, historically and typically the marginal man, the first cosmopolite and citizen of the world.<sup>35</sup>

There are many other types of cultural hybrids. Each in his own way lives on the margin of two or more value-systems. Among these other types are the "stranger," the gypsy, the hobo, boundary dwellers (i.e., people living on the boundary between two nations), and dwellers in furnished rooms.<sup>36</sup>

**The Unity of the Self.** If an individual has as many selves as there are people who carry an image of him in their minds, if his conception of himself varies according to situation and experience, is there any constant that we are justified in labeling the self? Is self a

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<sup>34</sup> See Stonequist, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>35</sup> Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," pp. 891-892. Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>36</sup> On the stranger see G. Simmel, *Soziologie* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1908); for a recent translation, see K. H. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1951). On the hobo see R. E. Park, "The Mind of the Hobo," in Park and Burgess, *The City*. On boundary dwellers see A. Gunther, "Soziologie des Grenzvolk, Erlautert an den Alpenlandern," *Jahrb. f. Soziol.*, 3 (1927), 200-234. For furnished-room dwellers see H. W. Zorbaugh, "Dwellers in Furnished Rooms: An Urban Type," in E. W. Burgess, ed., *The Urban Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), pp. 98-105.



unified or integrated pattern of behavior? Is it more than a "philosophical principle"?<sup>37</sup> We might as well face the fact at the beginning that a *completely* unified self does not exist, especially in a heterogeneous social world like that of Western man. But even in the most heterogeneous societies there are common cultural expectancies. These factors, together with the quality of the individual's interiorizations of the social norms, make for consistency and unity of the self.

Let us examine this assertion. In the section on the self and other selves we remarked that the unity of the individual self lies in the organization of the individual's separate roles into the generalized other. In the early stages of the development of the generalized other, as seen in the child's playing of an organized game, the "rules of the game" or the expectancies of others are not sharply defined, and the imperatives of the game lack the "moral force" of organized institutions. An element of consistency, however, is beginning to emerge, for on all occasions when the boy plays a baseball game, for instance, he is acting upon a set of recurrent expectancies. His "character" as a baseball player is thus being formed.

From an organized game to an organized community is a long way, but the path is not marked by sharp breaks and discontinuities. Rather, it is a continuous growth from the generalized other of the child to the generalized other of the adult. The adult behaves in accordance with the attitudes and expectancies of the community. He now takes attitudes not only toward himself and others but toward the whole complex of social activities which we call the community. The generalized other is the will of the community. An individual cognizant of the welfare of the community is acting on moral principles—principles, that is, which refer to the fate of the community as a whole. His behavior is characterized by social responsibility, or the capacity of foreseeing the consequences to the group of his own actions. Once this generalized role of the attitude toward the community is firmly established, it tends to remain as stable as the society which it reflects. This stability of the role of the generalized other is what we should have in mind when we speak of *character*. Character is neither a theological concept nor a "moral force" but a social attitude. The unity and persistence of character reflect the unity and persistence of the social self, and the latter in turn is a mirror of the unity and persistence of the social process as a whole. In popular speech we frequently ascribe the trait of *persistence*, of "moral stamina," to character, and this stresses rather well the element of continuity which we have in mind. Character is the relative persistence of

<sup>37</sup> See Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, pp. 348-349.



the interiorized values of the group throughout the life history of the individual. So conceived, it is an important and inseparable aspect of the total self.

Although in this view of character and its relation to the self we have disclosed its socially enhancing quality, we should also call attention to its resistance to change. A number of studies show that some attitudes which form character and the social self are inordinately rigid. This is more particularly true of strong prejudices, stereotypes, and inflexible self-images.<sup>38</sup> Deliberate efforts to bring about changes in self-involved attitudes are known to meet resistance. The more self-involved these attitudes are—that is, the more their change implies a threat to the integrity of the self—the more stubbornly they persist.<sup>39</sup>

The most adequate integration of the self consists of that type of organization of self-perceptions which will enable the individual to adjust himself smoothly to the demands of the group while permitting him to reorganize his perceptions to meet changes that come with new experience. Rigidity, as contrasted with unity, means social-psychologically the inability to reorganize one's field of self-perception. The integrated self is one that can reorganize its self-picture and alter its behavior in accordance with the objective situation. A person "internally unified has the greatest likelihood of meeting environmental problems constructively, either as an individual or in cooperation with others."<sup>40</sup>

### Adjustment and Enhancement of the Self

The fate of every human self is that it must at all times adjust itself to the expectancies of others. From the moment when he dimly communicates with members of his family, the child must share their ways of doing things. While he may be satisfied with himself as he is, and thus be well adjusted as far as his own needs and aspirations go, unless he conforms with the demands of others he is probably a misfit. Society judges a man largely by the extent of his conformity with its own values. Social psychologists and others dealing with the social nature of man are

<sup>38</sup> J. G. Darley, "Changes in Measured Attitudes and Adjustments," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 9 (1938), 189-199.

<sup>39</sup> W. S. Watson and G. W. Hartmann, "Rigidity of a Basic Attitudinal Frame," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 34 (1939), 314-336; H. Cantril, "The Intensity of an Attitude," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 41 (1946), 129-135.

<sup>40</sup> Rogers, "Some Observations on the Organization of Personality," p. 367.



themselves so influenced by this expectation that they gauge a man's personality almost too exclusively in terms of his capacity for adjustment. The "psychology of adjustment" has become a standard and popular division of the science of human behavior.

While we are obsessed with the problem of adjustment, we do not rest content with accepting things as they are: we must enhance ourselves. In Western society, man must strive for success. Therefore in our society the well-adjusted individual is one who not only conforms to the standards of the group but competes with others for a place in the sun. In view of the conflicting demands of life and the pressure to enhance the self, it becomes increasingly difficult to define adjustment. Since both self-enhancement and adjustment are considered of first importance in modern life, the process of the adjustment of the self becomes correspondingly more complicated. As we see it, a person is "well-adjusted" when he enlarges his "generalized other" to encompass not only others' expectancies but his own "self-actualization."<sup>41</sup> He behaves not only as the community wishes but in ways which will give him the greatest degree of self-expression. Where the two are incompatible but not mutually suppressing or mutually destructive, he will follow his own bent, secure in the thought that the world is bigger than his local bailiwick. The effect of this self-attitude is to diminish self-deception and broaden one's outlook. In this way one arrives at a better adjustment to oneself as well as to the selves of others.

**Techniques of Adjustment.** The self encounters frustrations very early in its career. As the child grows, these may multiply as a consequence of the increasing complexity of the world to which he must adjust. Unless he remains immature, regresses to a former level, or loses himself in autistic fantasy, he will erect bulwarks against every threat to the integrity and enhancement of the self. These bulwarks consist of "psychoanalytic mechanisms," a term for which we are indebted mostly to Sigmund Freud.<sup>42</sup>

Let us briefly recall here our observations regarding the individual's need to keep his self intact. The image of himself which every person has is a

<sup>41</sup> We are using the term in the sense employed by Maslow. See A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychol. Rev.*, 50 (1943), 370-396, and "Self-Actualizing People: A Study of Psychological Health," *Symposia on Topical Issues* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1950), No. 1, pp. 11-34. The self-actualizing person is one who is fulfilling himself, is doing the best that he is capable of doing. He is not self-satisfied, but he can nevertheless accept himself as he is. He is motivated basically by the need for growth and the need to realize his own potentiality.

<sup>42</sup> S. Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (London: Hogarth, 1937).



prized possession. Any criticism of it or slurs made upon it have a strong emotional effect upon its possessor. Any failure that wounds an individual's self-regard must either be accepted realistically or somehow rendered psychologically harmless. We are not concerned with the extreme measures of the self to maintain its integrity, such as those which it employs in mental disorders, but with the coping mechanisms which almost anyone may use to diminish distress. A psychoanalytic mechanism is a way of reacting to experiences which the self construes as threats to its being. It is a socially acquired habit, learned like any other habit. Like most habits, most mechanisms operate unconsciously.

The psychoanalytic mechanisms are essentially means of defending the self. It is characteristic of the self, however, that it desires not only to remain as it is, or to return to its former equilibrium when it has been disturbed, but to expand as well. Growth and development are properties not only of organic wholes but of social and psychological ones as well. Discontent with self when it fails to achieve its goal of self-enhancement or self-fulfillment is characteristic of most developed individuals. This is "the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything one is capable of becoming."<sup>43</sup>

There are, then, two broad categories of psychological adjustment techniques, namely, *self-defense* and *self-enhancement*. The functions of the techniques of self-defense are to keep the self intact and to conceal its nature whenever the individual's self-image is likely to be exposed. The function of the techniques of self-enhancement is to permit the individual to achieve the goals and ideals he has established for himself. Because of our association of the techniques of self-defense with the psychoanalytical and clinical studies of maladjustment, we tend to view the mechanisms of self-defense as neurotic devices. It is characteristic of every self to defend itself against changes, individual and group pressures, criticism, and the like. A technique of self-defense becomes a neurotic device when it leads to harmful self-deception or to false perceptions of social reality, or to nonreduction of tension. It is a mechanism of adjustment when it permits a person to resolve his conflicts. Fundamentally our problem is not whether these techniques lead to "good" adjustment or "bad" adjustment, but only whether they *adjust* the individual in that they reduce his conflicts and tensions.

*Repression.* Because psychoanalysts believe that *repression* is the basic mechanism of adjustment, we shall examine it first. Psycho-

<sup>43</sup> Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," p. 382.



logically, repression is a form of selective forgetting. The selection of what we forget is determined to a great extent by the degree of pain which accompanies socially disapproved behavior. On the whole, we tend to remember pleasant experiences more permanently than unpleasant ones. Repression is induced largely by the fear of disapproval by others. What we repress is the memory of an act which, because of disapproval by others in the past, arouses a feeling of guilt. What we repress on later occasions is not so much the memory of the act as our feeling of guilt associated with it.

The thoroughly social nature of repression is rather obvious. We repress those forms of behavior which, if carried out, would be a violation of society's customs. Repressed thoughts and deeds are usually those that are morally disapproved because their overt expression would be inimical to society's welfare. In this way repression has social value, for it impels the individual to inhibit his unsocialized and "destructive" interests and to direct them into socially approved behavior. Frequent conditioning in the form of repression may thus take on the character of a strong motive—the motive to curb one's private impulses in the interests of the group. Repression is thus always a function of the self, particularly the social self.

The social function of repression is most striking in the area of sexual behavior. There are no human impulses in Western society that are more circumscribed than those of sex; yet we now possess a large body of evidence showing that sexual repression is a recurring factor in maladjusted behavior. At the same time, sexual repression, with the aid of other mechanisms, such as sublimation, is at the basis of romantic and parental love. Monogamous marriage and the stability of the family are in no small degree maintained through sexual repression.

These functions of repression must be recognized and duly assessed by the social psychologist. At the same time there is much in its effect upon the individual to cause one to question its adjustive value. Unlike most mechanisms—sublimation and compensation, for example—its tension-reducing value is probably very small. Worse yet, as Shaffer pointed out, repression is tension-producing in itself.<sup>44</sup> Theoretically we must assume that, since repression inhibits the free expression of an aroused impulse, it will produce tension and instability. This assumption is generally confirmed by conditioned response experiments and by the clinical observations of most psychoanalysts.

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<sup>44</sup> L. F. Shaffer, *The Psychology of Adjustment* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936), p. 217.



*Fantasy.* The individual uses the technique of fantasy in his earliest attempts to adjust himself to changes in his environment. It is a normal phenomenon of childhood and plays a significant part in the child's assumption of the role of the other. As we saw in our discussions of language and socialization, the imaginative control of the environment is an important factor in the maturation of the child. The adult uses fantasy to overcome his frustrations. The work of psychoanalysts as well as experimental work, especially that of Dembo, Lissner, Mahler, and Hoppe, shows that the mature individual uses fantasy as a means of adjustment.<sup>45</sup> There is no escaping the need to find fantasy solutions to our problems, since no one can be psychologically equal to meet on a "plane of higher reality," i.e., realistically, all the frustrations of his life. The individual must therefore protect himself from developing a demoralized self-image, and fantasy is one means of retaining it unblemished.

Adjustment through fantasy may take place in three directions. Generally speaking, most people try to compensate for their balked wishes by daydreaming. If one does not overindulge in this mode of adjustment, there is no harm in it. Its limitation lies in its unproductiveness. Daydreaming solves no problems, though it brings temporary resolution of tensions. Fantasy in this case is a mode of escape from, rather than a solution of, a problem. There is a second type of individual who is so enamored of his fantasies and who finds them so gratifying that he prefers to stay with them. His preference for the dream world is so intense that we usually put him into a mental hospital. A third type of individual puts his fantasies to effective uses. He returns from the realm of fantasy with something to show for his trip. He has so reorganized his perceptions of the world and of himself that his adjustments are constructive. If, moreover, his adjustments are in the form of values that are widely admired, such as art, poetry, or science, we call him a genius. In a sense, genius is, indeed, as Santayana said, controlled madness. Shaffer writes of the effective use of fantasy:

... normal phantasy has ameliorative and recreational values that may serve desirable ends in adjustment. Phantasies of various kinds can act as balancing factors to give a proper proportion of satisfaction to an individual's life during periods when social adjustment is unusually difficult. The prevalence of daydream-

<sup>45</sup> T. Dembo, "Der Ärger als Dynamisches Problem," *Psychol. Forschung*, 15 (1931), 1-144; F. Hoppe, "Erfolg und Misserfolg," *Psychol. Forschung*, 14 (1930), 1-62; K. Lissner, "Die Entspannung von Bedürfnissen durch Ersatzhandlungen," *Psychol. Forschung*, 18 (1933), 218-250; W. Mahler, "Ersatzhandlungen Verschiedenen Realitätsgrades," *Psychol. Forschung*, 18 (1933), 26-89.



ing indicates that all persons need such compensation, which most of them use without becoming too immersed in unreality. In a broader meaning of the term, phantasy underlies all art. A world without phantasy would be one without music, literature, painting or drama, and therefore a much less pleasant place in which to live. So long as a balance between active adjustment and imagined satisfaction is maintained, phantasy is by no means undesirable. Perhaps, in a sense, the extremely unimaginative person is as one-sided and mal-adjusted as the one of opposite characteristics who depends too much on day-dreaming.<sup>46</sup>

A knowledge of the extent of an individual's fantasy solution of problems and of the degree of his satisfaction obtained from it constitutes one of the most important things to know about his self. Mahler's experiments with this problem are illuminating. She found that when a child is interrupted in an act—say, the construction of a house from wooden blocks—he will try to resume his work on various “planes of reality.” One of the planes of “lesser reality” is fantasy. The child will daydream of a solution or constructively plan a course of action.

Mahler's experiments have led her to conclude that the value of fantasy solution as a substitute for actual achievement is very small. She finds that the fantasy solution yields little satisfaction,—that is, reduction of tension and adjustment of the individual to his situation—unless it brings the individual to his original goal.<sup>47</sup>

*Compensation.* This is a mechanism of adjustment that all people resort to in the face of frustration, failure, and other threats to the self. It is a technique whereby the individual makes up for weaknesses or defects by emphasizing his strengths and assets. Thus a girl who fails to attract young men may make up for her failure by stressing her scholastic achievement. A young man who is mediocre in scholarship may satisfy his need for status through athletic prowess. An economically poor individual may take pride in his honesty and good character. A father may sacrifice everything to enable his son to become a physician and thereby make up for his own thwarted ambition. Compensation always implies a sense of inadequacy of the self, or a feeling of inferiority. Its adjustive function lies in its use as a means of overcoming weakness, limitation, and defeat by drawing attention to favorable characteristics, real or fancied. It serves as an adjustive mechanism in two ways. It is, first, a substitute for

<sup>46</sup> Shaffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 195–196. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

<sup>47</sup> Mahler, *op. cit.*



achievement along another line and so brings the individual using it a measure of satisfaction and relief from the tension which frustration begets. It is, second, a means of concealing from others and from the frustrated individual his own weakness or deficiency.

Whether compensatory activities make up for personal frustrations depends to a great extent on how well they reduce the tensions which inferiority or failure incur. While we cannot measure the compensatory value of a substitute act, the evidence suggests that compensation aids the individual in maintaining his self-respect. Since self-respect is largely a function of the respect of others toward an individual, it is reasonable to suppose that compensation also aids the individual in achieving the respect of his fellows. Most students of the mechanisms of adjustment are largely in agreement on this assertion.

Compensation can be a valuable mechanism of adjustment in that compensatory behavior changes an individual's attitudes toward himself. In enabling him to overcome a weakness through achievement in another direction, it fosters self-confidence and blurs the edge of his feeling of inferiority. Since so often it impels an individual to increase his motivation to succeed, it may serve as a basis for substantial achievement. This, in turn, may enhance his social status and reduce the need for excessive self-defense. In reducing his need for self-defense, the individual finds it easier to interact with others, for the tensions aroused by a constant vigil to bolster his unsteady self-perceptions are correspondingly reduced. His increased and more relaxed relations with others encourages their greater acceptance of him. Acceptance by others adds to his self-confidence and so improves his adjustment to them. As Symonds points out, compensation "may help a person to be happy himself and also more acceptable to others."<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, compensation frequently encourages an individual to withdraw from others. To the extent that he withdraws from interaction with others, his role-acting is diminished and his social skills are correspondingly affected. In this way he tends to become alienated from others, for they do not take sympathetically to his unsocial habits. Frequently his isolation and his exaggerated efforts to achieve status lead to eccentric behavior which increases his social unacceptability and intensifies his feeling of inferiority. Finally, in compensation the person yields too readily to the seductive power of fantasy. As we said earlier, a modicum of fantasy enjoyment is normal and harmless, and might even reduce tensions for some

<sup>48</sup> P. M. Symonds, *Dynamic Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), p. 318.



fleeting moments. The power of mischief which indulgence in fantasy engenders, however, must not be overlooked. Weakness and deficiency cannot be overcome by wishful thinking but only by redoubled effort toward substantial achievement.

*Rationalization.* Rationalization as a mechanism of adjustment is a technique of self-concealment and self-justification. A person who rationalizes always fears disapproval from others or from himself. He gives emotionally satisfying rather than real reasons for committing an act. Rationalization is unwitting and unconscious; it is a mechanism used by the self to forestall criticism or to defend him against the distress of facing his own failure. The real motive behind the rationalized behavior is a desire for mastery, for social approval, for appearing superior to what we are. Rationalization is illustrated by the poor or lazy student who says that it is the instructor's fault that he failed a course. If the instructor had been a better teacher and a more honest grader, the student would have passed. The old maid who has been thrust aside by the more marriageable women of her set explains her spinsterhood by saying that she has found no one good enough for her; or she may say that she refused to surrender her freedom to any man.

Rationalization is a form of making excuses, socially induced and socially condoned. It is socially induced because society sets up standards and values by which a person lives; if he fails to live up to its expectations he suffers in its esteem. It is socially condoned because society does not tolerate complete sincerity in its members, for such sincerity would be inimical to social harmony. Many of the rules of etiquette are social pressures on the individual to practice insincerity in his relations with others for the sake of the group. For instance, one cannot refuse a dinner invitation by saying he dislikes the person inviting him, but must declare prior commitments or plead a headache. Acts performed in response to these social pressures in time become habits and are performed automatically. It is no discredit to the poised socialite that he performs his functions with consummate skill, but it is nevertheless psychologically true that his actions are motivated by the fear of social disapproval.

Many rationalizations are products of partial repression, for we give excuses about those forms of behavior which are socially disapproved. People would be dismayed by a woman who frankly admitted that she pursued a man for sexual reasons, or by a man who admitted a craven fear of another man. Thus the woman will make her sexual interests acceptable if she ascribes her interests to the man's fascination and charm; and the coward will justify his behavior if he pleads for the indignity of personal combat.



From the standpoint of the psychology of the self, rationalization is a mechanism for resolving the conflict between the individual's strivings and the cultural values of the group, or between basic impulses and the sentiment of self-regard. The sentiment of self-regard, particularly, plays a crucial role in all forms of rationalization. This is especially noticeable in the realm of competitive relationships. Much of the innuendo, backbiting, and depreciation of others is a form of argument in defense of one's own self-image by way of defaming the social images of others.

We have no adequate experimental data of the adjustive value of rationalization, but psychoanalytical interpretations show that it is not a desirable mechanism of adjustment. To the extent that it is a form of self-deception, distorting one's self-image and one's view of the world, it is detrimental. To the extent that it fosters the inability to face life and causes one to build up all sorts of illusions about oneself and others, its value is chiefly negative. Yet at the same time, the vices of rationalization contain its only virtue: it enables the person to avert his gaze from his feeble self and so find sporadic relief from distressing anxiety.

*Projection.* Projection is closely related to rationalization. With this mechanism, instead of giving a pseudo-rational explanation of one's unacceptable motives, as in rationalization, the individual ascribes them to others. His weakness is now not in himself but in another. In this way the individual does not merely "explain" or "justify" his tendencies but unconsciously denies their presence in himself. The person who habitually suspects others of evil intent often has the evil motives himself, but cannot bear to acknowledge them. Thus the mother who has an exaggerated concern about her daughter's sexual morals is probably falsely perceiving in her daughter her own repressed erotic interests. The student who chronically suspects other students of cheating on their examinations may have a repressed desire to do the same. Through projection the individual guards himself from exposure, disapproval, or punishment by ascribing his faults to others. Like the mechanisms of adjustment we have already described, projection is a technique of defending a threatened self, but it is more dangerous to use. When the process becomes chronic, the resulting condition is often *paranoia*, a mental disorder in which projection is a leading characteristic.

Psychoanalysts have clinically demonstrated that projection is a defense mechanism against anxiety. They have found that anxiety is appreciably reduced in a patient when he is able to ascribe his shame, guilt, or sense of failure to persons or situations outside himself.

Sears has made some experimental studies of projection. He conducted



one experiment in which he asked nearly a hundred college fraternity men to rate themselves and one another on such traits as obstinacy, bashfulness, stinginess, and disorderliness. He found that those men who had more than the average amount of a trait were inclined to ascribe more than an average amount to others, provided they lacked insight; i.e., provided there was a marked discrepancy between their self-rating and the ratings ascribed to them by others.<sup>49</sup> The implication of this study is that projection of traits seems to be a function of insight. Insight, itself, however, is in large part a function of the stability of the self. A person who considers himself unworthy and inferior and yet cannot accept himself as he is lacks insight. Lacking insight and the strength to face reality, he projects. Lack of insight alone will not be the occasion for projection; an injured self-image must be there to becloud the individual's conception of himself and the world.

Practically all the evidence at our disposal shows that projection is all in all an ineffectual mode of adjustment. Like rationalization it is a palliative, rather than a means to the solution of interpersonal difficulties. It damages insight and so closes the door to establishing socially adequate relationships.

On the other hand, as it enables an individual to manage his own tensions, however haltingly, its psychological value must be acknowledged. A person whose psychological resources are very limited but who nevertheless is sensitive to the demands of his group can help to maintain his self-respect and the respect of others by denying his own weakness and ascribing it to others, especially those for whom he has strong ambivalent feelings. Symonds puts the matter well when he writes:

It has been said that we need other persons in part so that we may hate them. Projection of our impulses unto others helps us to regulate and order our own lives. This is seen most clearly when laws are considered as projections of one's own tendencies toward self-regulation, where the self feels hardly adequate to manage its own dangerous erotic and aggressive tendencies. These can be projected out unto other people who will serve as regulators and arbiters of these tendencies, thus effecting a certain degree of security. This is the method that society has worked out in order to control the dangerous impulses and bring them into some semblance of order.<sup>50</sup>

*Fixation and regression.* Although clinicians distinguish between these two modes of adjustment, we shall, because of their close

<sup>49</sup> R. R. Sears, "Experimental Studies of Projection: I. Attribution of Traits," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 7 (1936), 151-163.

<sup>50</sup> Symonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239. Reprinted by permission of Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.



relationship, examine them together. Fixation, when the term is used for a mechanism of adjustment, is the arrest of development at an immature level. A person develops normally up to a certain point and then remains at that level. People who "never grow up" illustrate this form of adjustment. The perennial adolescent who, whatever his years, continues to be carefree or irresponsible, an exuberant prankster or a boisterous clown, is fixated at an immature stage in the growth of the self.

The psychoanalysts also give a narrower meaning to this term. Fixation from their point of view refers to an arrest of psychic energy at an infantile level. Thus, because of frustration or lack of complete satisfaction of certain needs—say sucking—the child's attention is too fixated on the oral functions, so that even when he is grown up he is too engrossed in oral satisfaction, such as eating or drinking. An adult who has not outgrown his childish genital fixations may continue to masturbate throughout his life.

Fixation is also directed toward other people, especially toward those who ministered to the child's needs in his early years, such as the mother or father. "Mother-fixation" or "father-fixation" are well-known phenomena and describe the failure of the individual to become emancipated from his emotional ties to his parents and from their control over him.

Regression means a *return* to an earlier mode of adjustment after a mature form had already been attained. Regression invariably occurs during emotional disturbances or other crises which require new solutions for which the individual is psychologically ill-equipped. Under those circumstances the individual will return to earlier successful solutions. Thus a young woman student, finding the prospect of passing a course to be very grim, may burst into tears in the face of her helplessness. This form of behavior probably solved many of her childhood problems and so she unconsciously reverts to it in a trying situation. Since her behavior is inconsistent with her adult status, we describe it as a form of regression.

Both fixation and regression are defenses of the self; both are products of tension and anxiety aroused by serious threats to its integrity.

There are several other mechanisms of adjustment, including *identification* and *sublimation*. Identification consists to a large extent in erecting a model for the self to imitate. Sublimation is not easy to distinguish clearly from some aspects of compensation. In many ways a person who sublimates an impulse is finding a compensatory expression of it. Sublimation refers to the need of the socialized individual to redirect forbidden urges into socially accepted forms of behavior. Thus the frustrated lover may write idyllic poetry; the childless woman may engage in work where care and affection for children are required. The psychological process involved in sublimation



is rather obscure and the extent to which it satisfies a blocked urge has probably been exaggerated.

**Self-enhancement.** Biologists and psychologists have tended to overstress the stabilizing aspect of homeostasis. According to this mode of analysis of the dynamics of growth and behavior, the tendency of every organism is to return to a condition of repose or equilibrium when its needs are satisfied. No one can object to this claim, for experimental work bears out its validity. The human organism, however, driven by the urgency to preserve its self-image, will abandon its present security in order to achieve it on a higher level of integration. As Krech and Crutchfield point out, when the individual achieves a desired goal his standards of performance are thereby changed and he is impelled to strive for higher levels of achievement.<sup>51</sup> In the case of the human self, in contrast to the integrated behavior of lower organisms, the social pressures and cultural values impel the individual to seek a higher level of stable organization. The human self desires not only to survive but to grow. As a consequence of identifications and group pressures, it sets up goals and ideals that challenge its complacency. A self that has stopped growing is not a healthy self. Although death will eventually overtake it, while it lives it cannot accept stagnation: *a resigned self is a sick self.*

**Level of aspiration.** A mark of our civilization is not only that it values selfhood almost more than anything else but that it imposes competitive standards on the growing child. The need to compare oneself with others is well-nigh compulsive. Comparison with others implies the setting of values or goals to be achieved. Success or failure can be measured only by knowledge of the goals that impel the individual to action. This involves a constant restructurization of the self in accordance with the level of success that we must achieve. This restructurization is paradoxically at once pleasant and painful. It is painful because it means change from the comforts of stability and rest. It is pleasant in a double sense: it carries reward in the form of recognition and praise from others, and it helps the individual to keep his self-esteem intact. For this reason success in achieving one's goal is at once a mechanism of self-defense and of self-enhancement.

The enhancement of the self can be fruitfully studied by means of the concept of "level of aspiration," a term introduced by Dembo and applied

<sup>51</sup> D. Krech and R. S. Crutchfield, *Theory and Problems of Social Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 69.



by herself and other early associates of Kurt Lewin.<sup>52</sup> It is concerned with that aspect of the total self which is "clearly or dimly glimpsed as *something to be realized*."<sup>53</sup> It represents both the individual's expectancy of success or failure and his conceptions of himself in the light of social norms. In short, a person's level of aspiration is an integral and important part of his self-picture, for it represents him not only as he is, but also as he would like to be.

*Determinants of the level of aspiration.* The problem of discovering the factors which determine an individual's striving for a goal is inordinately complex. The experimental data are extremely helpful in this connection, but they represent rather oversimplified and narrow explanations. To date, however, they are the most adequate and useful that we have. If we bear in mind that they were derived from single decisions regarding an individual's striving toward a goal, the danger of oversimplification can be largely overcome. While some determinants affect the individual only in so far as he is working toward a particular goal, others seem to be relatively permanent in their effects upon the self and very much the same for everyone in a given social milieu. The determinants of the level of aspiration have been divided by Lewin and his associates into two large categories, viz., temporary situational factors and general cultural factors.

Temporary situational factors are those related to the nature of a goal to be achieved. Generally speaking a person experiences little or no self-satisfaction from performing a task too far below his level of aspiration. Experimentation concerned with the temporary situational factors has resulted in the following conclusions: First, the greater the success in the performance of a task the higher will be the level of aspiration, and the worse the failure the lower will be the level of aspiration. Again, success or failure in one task affects a person's level of aspiration in another task. If in two series of tasks the individual feels that *the second is a continuation of the first*, there is considerable transfer of effect from one to the other. Thus, if he experienced success in the first series, his level of aspiration in the second series will go up; if he failed, it will go down. Finally, there is a tendency to cease working on a problem when the opportunities for further achievement are not promising.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Dembo, *op. cit.* A comprehensive summary of the subject of level of aspiration is given in K. Lewin, *et al.*, "Level of Aspiration," in J. McV. Hunt, ed., *Personality and the Behavior Disorders* (New York: Ronald, 1944), Vol. I, chap. x.

<sup>53</sup> Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 539.

<sup>54</sup> K. Lewin, *et al.*, in J. McV. Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-340.



General cultural factors make up the second group of determinants. If our emphasis on the role of social and cultural forces in shaping the self is justified, we should expect the level of aspiration of the self to be significantly affected by those forces. Experimental evidence suggests that that is the case. We have in mind here particularly the effect of group standards upon the aspirations of the individual. Chapman and Volkman, for example, found among their experimental subjects that those who compared themselves to an inferior group raised it.<sup>55</sup> Their experiments, and those of Sears, call attention to the cultural pressures to achieve and to keep the achievement rising—to the fact, in short, that social norms play an important part in determining the level at which we aim and the performance with which we are satisfied.<sup>56</sup> Sears emphasizes the incorporation of cultural norms in the activities of the self. She writes:

... the child is informed, by example and precept of prestigious persons, as to what are the valued activities in the particular culture or subculture of which he is a member. These values, incorporated in the ego, become points for self-judgments of success or failure; that is, the child cannot succeed or fail in an activity which has for him no ego value. In those activities which have ego-involvements he can, and does, succeed and fail.<sup>57</sup>

The experimentation of Chapman and Volkman, as well as that of Sears, led them to the conclusion reached by earlier investigators, James, Cooley, and Mead. That is, setting up goals and striving for their attainment is irrevocably bound up with the sense of self and the compulsion to secure and maintain the respect of one's group.<sup>58</sup>

Other experimenters have found that in the striving for goals there is pressure toward social conformity. Those individuals whose performance is superior to the standards of the group underestimate their future achievement, whereas those whose performance is inferior to the group standards overestimate their future achievement. In both cases we see the tendency

<sup>55</sup> D. W. Chapman and J. Volkman, "A Social Determinant of the Level of Aspiration," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 34 (1939), 225-238.

<sup>56</sup> P. S. Sears, "Levels of Aspiration in Academically Successful and Unsuccessful Children," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 35 (1940), 498-536.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 499. Reprinted by permission of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* and the American Psychological Association, Inc., Washington, D.C.

<sup>58</sup> P. J. Greenberg, "Competition in Children," *Am. J. Psychol.*, 44 (1932), 221-248; S. Rosenzweig, "Preferences in the Repetition of Successful and Unsuccessful Activities as a Function of Age and Personality," *J. Genet. Psychol.*, 42 (1933), 423-441. See also the works of James, Cooley, and Dewey already cited.



of social norms to compel the individual to "estimate toward the mean of the group."<sup>59</sup>

The group pressures upon the individual's level of aspiration are so strong that the self is led to indulge in the kind of self-deception and fear of self-exposure which we described earlier. The level of aspiration which a person sets up for himself is frequently determined by the amount of self-esteem which he needs to maintain. A person whose self-image is wavering and unstable will go to extreme lengths to prop it up. He may deliberately set his sights low to convince himself that he has succeeded; or aim so high that, although failure is in the cards, he gains prestige in his own eyes by impressing others with his high aspirations. The self conceals poor performance from itself in order to protect itself from the unfavorable judgments of others.<sup>60</sup> Thus the psychoanalytical mechanisms of defense are employed by the individual not only to defend, but also to enhance, the self. Self-defense and self-enhancement are closely intertwined.

## Conclusion

Our analysis of the nature of self-hood cannot portray its full complexity.

Nevertheless, a preliminary sketch of the fuller portrait is beginning to emerge. The self is first of all a way of interiorizing the external social world. It is a way of conceiving oneself in relation to others. If a person's comparison with others and with the cultural expectancies of the group is favorable, his self-image is preserved and enhanced. If it compares unfavorably, his self-esteem is threatened. In the face of upsetting threats to the self, therefore, an individual will utilize such mechanisms of adjustment as most adequately serve his purpose.

The development of a self-picture is closely bound up with role-acting. One sees one's self as a reflection of the selves of others. By introjecting these images of the selves of others, one acts out the roles of these others in his own role. By taking the role of another, the individual finds his own role. This taking of the role of another includes taking one's own role. That is the meaning of Mead's assertion that the self arises out of the capacity of an individual to be an object to himself.

In our relations with members of our group we acquire self-esteem. Self-esteem is fundamentally a person's reaction to other people's opinions of himself. It is

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<sup>59</sup> E. R. Hilgard, E. M. Sait, and G. A. Magaret, "Level of Aspiration as Affected by Relative Standing in an Experimental Social Group," *J. Exp. Psychol.*, 27 (1940), 411-421.

<sup>60</sup> J. D. Frank, "Recent Studies of the Level of Aspiration," *Psychol. Bull.*, 38 (1941), 218-226.



the individual's response to the image of himself that others carry in their imagination. This implies what recent researches have generally confirmed, that one's self is always an aspect of the selves of others; that is, that the self gets its meaning by becoming identified or "involved," as Sherif and Cantril describe it, with the selves of others, their activities, their attitudes and goals, and the like. Apart from self-involvement, i.e., apart from the identification with others and the pursuit of goals, the self has no anchorage in social reality, and all striving on his part becomes meaningless or indifferent. Self-involvements, since they entail the attitude of others toward one's self, thus establish and vouchsafe one's personal identity.

Whether the empirical evidence in support of the nature and functioning of the self as expounded in this chapter is sufficient to give it the stature of a scientific explanation it is too early to tell. At all events it is important to recognize that the theoretical formulations are essentially phenomenological in character and the experimental results are based largely on what Stagner calls "miniature situations."<sup>61</sup> These "miniature situations" are small-scale duplications of real-life conditions. Until better means are devised to study the involvements of the self in their kaleidoscopic complexity, we shall have to use our present methods. Investigations of the self cannot cease, for students of human behavior are increasingly conscious of its importance. It is most fitting to bring this discussion to an end, therefore, by stating Allport's evaluation of the self in the study of personality, namely, that "only with its aid can psychologists reconcile the human nature that they study and the human nature that they serve."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> R. Stagner, *Psychology of Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 34.

<sup>62</sup> Allport, "The Ego in Contemporary Psychology," p. 476.



## CHAPTER 6 :

# The Motivation of Behavior

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER we saw that self-esteem is a strong need in everyone, and that the individual will go to great lengths to attain and safeguard it. When this need is adequately satisfied, the individual is generally well adjusted to himself and to others. When it is not satisfied, he is impelled to use one or more of the mechanisms of adjustment. This impulsion toward self-esteem describes a strong *motivation* in the human individual. It calls attention to the *goal-integrated* character of human behavior, to the fact, in other words, that man sets up ends which he *strives* to achieve.

Motivations are fundamentally dynamic; they describe the directional properties of human action. They imply a state of tension, disequilibrium, or movement. Accordingly, when we come to the problem of human motivation, we are concerned with the dynamic "push" underlying an indi-



vidual's behavior. When barriers to achievement arise, the individual redoubles his effort to overcome them and to reach his goal. He feels driven, as it were, and until he has either succeeded or failed in his efforts, he persists in the pursuit of his goal.

Human strivings are discriminatory or selective. Man does not strive for everything, but only for certain things. As his motives become increasingly socialized by social pressures and experience, they become correspondingly more selective. Animals—and human infants—do not have a high degree of selectivity in their propulsive behavior. Their major concern is the satisfaction of basic physiological tensions. It is a fundamental error, therefore, to base the study of human motivation on a knowledge of animal drives. Maslow, like a number of other writers, has done the social psychology of motivation a valuable service by emphasizing the “human-centering” of motivations. As he points out, too many of the generalizations regarding animal drives are not relevant to human motivation. It is a mistake, he asserts, to assume that it is “more ‘scientific’ to judge human beings by animal standards,” and on this basis to exclude the study of purposive behavior from motivational psychology.<sup>1</sup>

## The Problem of Motivation

Probably every reflective person has on some occasions wondered what powerful incentive exists in human beings to cause them to persist, often in the face of unbelievable odds, along a certain line of action. What impels a person to continue along a prospective line of action until he reaches a desired goal? Why, indeed, should he strive at all? It is not easy to answer these questions, for human motives cannot be *directly* observed. The problem has interested students of human behavior for a long time, and they have formulated various theories concerning it.

**Motives as Instincts.** The motive forces of behavior, according to McDougall, are instincts. An instinct is “an inherited or innate psychological disposition” which causes a person to perceive and react to certain objects, to experience an emotion in response to them, and to act with reference to it.<sup>2</sup> McDougall built up about a dozen instincts, such as pugnacity, curiosity, and self-assertion, by which he accounted for human behavior.

Freud also explained motivation on the basis of instinct. According to

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Maslow, “A Theory of Motivation,” *Psychol. Rev.*, 50 (1943), 370–396.

<sup>2</sup> W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (Boston: Luce, 1913), p. 30.



him, man behaves in accordance with two basic urges, viz., the life instinct and the death instinct.<sup>3</sup> The first impels man to love and create; the second, to hate and destroy. If a man devotes his life to an unselfish cause, to invention or discovery, he is motivated by the life impulse. If he strives for an unworthy end, such as the exploitation or ruin of another as a means of achieving his own purpose, he is motivated by the death impulse. If man does not always operate on the basis of the destructive urge, it is because the pressures of society inhibit him. Here Freud recognizes the importance of social and cultural forces in determining the course of human behavior.

**Motives as Drives.** Dissatisfied with the hypothesis of native urges or instincts, psychologists, largely under the influence of significant biological research in the 1920's, have used the term *drive* to describe the process by which an organism removes its tensions. A drive is a condition of disequilibrium which impels the organism to activity. Thus, when the infant is hungry he engages in a variety of movements until his hunger is satisfied. The situation which initiates the activity of feeding is the condition of muscular contraction of the stomach. The contraction of the stomach is a state of disequilibrium or tension which the infant finds unpleasant and which can be terminated only by the ingestion of food. While the need for food is inherent in the organic make-up of the child, the activities which are necessary to satisfy it are acquired or learned. The adjustive habits which reduce or satisfy the intensity of the drive are called *mechanisms*. A mechanism is thus an acquired technique for reducing or temporarily de-activating a drive. The state of equilibrium which results from the satisfaction of the need or drive is called *consummation*. The process by which an organism moves from need through mechanism to consummation is a cycle of activity by which it adjusts itself to the recurring alterations of its daily life.

Drives in the restricted sense here employed are biogenic or organically embedded needs of the organism. They are universal physiological tensions like hunger, thirst, sex-needs, sleep, etc. While culture affects the manner of their satisfaction, they are organic, not dependent on experience.<sup>4</sup>

**Motives as Acquired Habits.** Although social psychologists accept

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<sup>3</sup> In the 1930's Freud expressed some doubts regarding the validity of his theory of innate urges, and described them as "mythical beings"—that is, methodological constructs, rather than real psychological forces. See his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1933).

<sup>4</sup> For a thorough and highly reliable discussion of drives, see C. T. Morgan, *Physiological Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943).



the use of the term *drive* to describe universal organic needs, they prefer to use the term *motive* to designate socially conditioned needs. Motives are derived from the social group in different learning situations. They vary with individuals and with groups. They are habits built up in the individual through early and constant exposure to social and cultural values and expectancies. Unlike the drives, which lie largely in the field of biology and comparative psychology, motives are the special province of the social psychologist. Men strive for such values as success, self-esteem, security, affection, and the like, not because they are biological animals, but because they are social beings responsive to the attitudes and evaluations of other social beings.

A motive is a determinant of behavior in two ways: (1) it is the modification or transformation of a drive by social expectancies, and (2) it is a derived need to achieve individually and culturally established goals. In contrast to a drive, which is always dependent on the condition of specific tissue needs of the organism, a motive may be quite independent of them and therefore independent also of a drive.

### The Social Derivation of Motives

Because human behavior is too complex to be explained by means of simple formulas, we cannot account for man's conduct by instincts or simple drives. Man is everywhere molded and remolded by the dominant values and patterned behavior forms of his group. In order to understand why a man behaves as he does, we must search out not only the "basic" physiological urges, but must discover the social circumstances which impel him to take a specific line of action. The physiological drives enable us to account for most of the similarities that we find in human behavior, for they are based on the universal physiological structure of the human organism. We consider these physiological drives important, but our interest in them lies largely in their modification by custom and social expectancies. We perforce deal not with biological, but with social-psychological, dynamics. Our task is the more difficult, for we cannot measure the relative strength of human desires as we can animal drives under controlled conditions in the laboratory. Our explanations must derive from the study of the individual in his interactions with other individuals and from the study of the impress of cultural values upon the developing person.

**The Role of Frustration.** There is no animal that even approximates man in the number and in the imperiousness of his needs and demands. Man is forever seeking to satisfy his wishes and creating



new ones when the old ones have, through satisfaction, lost their appeal. When hunger and other needs of an animal are gratified and his physiological equilibrium is thereby restored, he tends for some time at least to be satisfied. He does not dream of more and better food to conquer or of new wants to be pursued. Man, on the other hand, seems to be in a chronic state of want. No sooner is one need satisfied than another, or a host of others, is instigated by the pressures of social living. The need to keep up with the Joneses is a simple illustration of this process. The social group is constantly presenting new attractions to upset him and to goad him on to greater achievement.

A being so beset by needs and desires is destined to have many frustrations. A frustration is a state of tension produced by the blocking of an individual's effort to satisfy a need or achieve a goal. As a consequence of this blocking and tension-producing experience, the individual ordinarily redoubles his efforts to achieve, either in the direction of the blocked goal or along another line of action. An enormous amount of energy is expended to achieve satisfaction. The amount of energy expended is an important indicator of the degree of frustration. Generally speaking, the greater the frustration, the greater is the amount of energy expended. This is not to be construed as a rigid conclusion, for obviously frustration may lead to withdrawal, postponement, or surrender of the object. The point we wish to make, however, is that frustration itself becomes in human beings one of the strongest motives to action. Probably all the great and good things of civilized life derive in part at least from unfulfilled wants and frustrated efforts. One of the most important things to know about a person is how he meets the barriers to achievement and the nature of his reactions to frustration. The response to frustration reveals not only the individual's immediate reactions but throws significant light on his whole manner of adjustment and his personality as a whole. Unresolved tensions or frustrations may constitute no threat to some individuals; to others they may be a source of chronic emotional distress; to others still they may serve as stimuli to greater effort toward the resolution of tensions.

The concept of *frustration tolerance* is helpful in studying the effects of frustration upon the individual.<sup>5</sup> Frustration tolerance refers to a person's capacity to endure blocked tensions without resorting to inadequate modes of adjustment. An individual with a high frustration tolerance stands the blocking of wishes adequately. He may try other means of satisfying his

<sup>5</sup> S. Rosenzweig, "Frustration as an Experimental Problem," *Character and Pers.*, 7 (1938), 126-128.



wishes, relieve tension by a realistic appraisal of himself and the frustrating situation, or persist along lines of behavior that promise eventual solution of his problem. An individual with a low frustration tolerance usually resorts to unsatisfactory techniques of response to a frustrating situation. This may consist of fruitless daydreaming, outbursts of anger, aggressiveness, neurotic behavior, helplessness, and the like.

Whatever the outcome of a frustrated wish short of its satisfaction, it tends to remain much more active than a wish that has been satisfied. Experiments on the perseveration of effort by Lewin, Zeigarnik, Rosenzweig, and others illustrate this fact. In these experiments children were permitted to finish some tasks, such as constructing objects from construction blocks, but were interrupted before completing others. When the children were later permitted to work with the toys again, they chose more frequently to go to those tasks in which they had been interrupted than to those they had completed.<sup>6</sup>

Generally speaking, frustration enhances the attractiveness of a goal. Lewin concluded thus on the basis of experimental data; and in various experiments with children Wright found that inaccessible toys were more attractive to children than those within easy reach.<sup>7</sup> Experiments also show, however, that if the goals are distinctly unattainable their attractiveness declines.

The values of these and other experiments is that they throw light on the problem of motivation. Frustration is tension-producing, and as long as the tension is unresolved the individual tends to persist in his efforts to achieve their resolution. An unfulfilled need or desire impels the individual to satisfy it, and frustration after frustration only sharpens his preoccupation with it. This perseveration may become so powerful as to determine the individual's perception of the world and of himself in it. Satisfied wishes rarely, if ever, have this effect upon an individual's behavior.

The term *frustration* has, unfortunately, acquired a sense of opprobrium. We associate it with maladjustment and abnormality. When we describe someone as a frustrated person, we do so reproachfully instead of descriptively. Yet frustration means no more than a condition of *interruption* of or *interference* with an individual's efforts to reach a goal. The word *tension*,

<sup>6</sup> This method is known as the Zeigarnik technique. For a discussion of the technique and the results, see K. Lewin, *Dynamic Theory of Personality* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935), chap. viii.

<sup>7</sup> H. F. Wright, "Influence of Barriers upon Strength of Motivation," *Contributions to Psychological Theory* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1937), Vol. I, No. 3.



likewise, has an unfortunate connotation. It conveys the idea of nervous strain, a state of unrelaxed stress. Actually it can mean a state of readiness or expectancy, a preparation for action. Frustration and tension may be highly desirable states, for as we indicated earlier, they are one of the most powerful sources of human achievement. They are instrumental in increasing an individual's efforts and in reorganizing his self-perceptions toward the achievement of his goal.

Experimentation concerned with the role of frustration in motivation sheds light upon still another problem. The psychoanalysts stress the permanent effect of childhood experiences upon the adult. They believe that an individual's present behavior is largely a product of his past pleasures and pains, successes and failures, satisfactions and frustrations. The Gestalt view of Lewin and his associates, and Allport's theory of the functional autonomy of motives, challenge the Freudian theory. Lewin's theory stresses the importance of contemporary events on the individual's behavior; Allport's view calls attention to the role of the person himself.

Allport holds that a motive cannot be understood solely on the basis of a child's early experiences of satisfaction or frustration, as Freud claimed. An adult's present behavior may have no functional connection with his past behavior, but may exist independently. "Motivation is *always* contemporary."<sup>8</sup> The theory denies that the motives of an adult personality are only later expressions of infantile desires or frustrations. "The life of a tree," Allport says, by way of elucidation, "is continuous with that of its seed, but the seed no longer sustains and nourishes the full grown tree. Earlier purposes lead into later purposes, but are abandoned in their favor."<sup>9</sup> A child who, because he was bitten by a dog, feared all dogs, may in later years not only love dogs but become an expert dog fancier as well. The historical connection between the earlier and later events is intact, but the functional tie is broken.

At first sight the three theories of motivation—the psychoanalytic, the Gestalt view of Lewin, and Allport's theory of functional autonomy—seem to be at considerable variance with one another. This is a result primarily of the *overemphasis* by each of its fundamental tenets. The psychoanalysts make too much of infantile experiences; yet, infantile experiences cannot be ignored. Lewin exaggerates the overwhelming force of the immediate situation; yet, the situational factor plays a vital role. Allport imputes too much

<sup>8</sup> G. W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Holt, 1937), p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.



importance to the autonomy of the self; yet, one's self-image is a potent factor in every goal-integrated act. Approached in this manner the three points of view are complementary rather than antagonistic.<sup>10</sup>

**The Channelization of Drives.** We have defined drives as biological needs which disturb the equilibrium of the organism and induce responses or activities which are aimed at restoring its balance. The behavior of every person is affected by universal drives, and we can within narrow limits predict his behavior with reference to them in advance. If he is hungry, he will seek food; if thirsty, he will seek water; if sexually aroused, he will seek coitus.

But outside the proverbial deserted island of fiction, where man is alone and likes it, he will satisfy these needs in accordance with the practices of the group in which he lives. In the presence of detailed information of the sociocultural life of the group, we can also with some degree of success predict his behavior in eating, drinking, and coitus. If, furthermore, we should be fortunate enough to have a detailed and profound understanding of his self, particularly his own self-image, we should also know why he prefers one food to another, why he drinks tea or wine instead of water, or why he selects one sexual object rather than another in gratifying his genital heeds.

The need and the effort by an individual to harmonize his drives with the social values and expectancies of his group result in motivation, or socially conditioned needs. Human motives are derived in the act of satisfying basic drives. They are learned by the individual through three interrelated and inseparable processes: cross-conditioning, anticipation, and cultural patterning.

**Cross-conditioning.** In Chapter 4 we described the conditioning of an infant having his hunger satisfied by his mother. At first the hunger drive is very *specific*: food in the form of milk alone can satisfy the drive, and the child has no other interest in the mother than as an object for reducing his hunger tensions. He "wants" her for that and nothing more. Gradually, however, the mother *herself* becomes an object of interest. He learns to associate pleasure with her not only because she satisfies his hunger but also because she fondles, pets, and utters words to him. These subsidiary feeding activities become associated with pleasure and a feeling of well-being. In time these activities in themselves, even when no food accompanies them, arouse a positively toned response toward the mother. With further maturation her *presence* alone is sufficient to arouse

<sup>10</sup> For a promising integration of various points of view see A. Angyal, *Foundations for a Science of Personality* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1941).



these responses. As he gets older the child comes to associate other expected forms of behavior with eating, such as good manners and a clean plate. This behavior is a conditioned response to approbation from the mother, and so it too becomes linked with her as a source of satisfaction.

Without pursuing this process further, it is clear that the primary goal of releasing hunger tension has slowly given way to forms of behavior which have no direct relationship to the original urge. They have become secondary or derived goals. By the time the individual has reached maturity, the derived goals may take on a large variety of forms, depending on the expectancies of the group and the manner in which the individual has incorporated them into his perceptual organization. The important fact to keep in mind here is that *the derived or learned goals become progressively more independent of the basic drives* which may have served as the original or primary impetus to action. This process is sometimes called *cross-conditioning*.<sup>11</sup>

The principle of cross-conditioning applies with equal validity, of course, to negatively toned responses. If the mother should respond to the infant's hunger tensions with impatience or irritability, if she spoke harshly to him, if she punished him for his "bad" manners and his uneaten food, he would probably find his mother generally undesirable, even though she satisfied his immediate hunger tensions. Painful experiences, like pleasurable ones, become associated with an original drive and, like the latter, become generalized and pervasive in their functioning.

*Anticipation.* The factor of anticipation is implicit in cross-conditioning. The hungry child who has been gratified by his mother anticipates similar gratification on future occasions. At the sight of her presence he "gets set" to receive his food. His movements become more numerous and vigorous; his mouth may prepare to receive the nipple; and a kind of general "excitement" marks his behavior. When he is older the same mechanism operates. If his table manners are not what they are expected to be, he may anticipate reproof, for on past occasions that was his mother's response to his unacceptable behavior. There is a tendency in social learning, as Miller and Dollard have shown, for reactions near the point of reward to move forward in the series, or to become anticipatory.<sup>12</sup>

It is well known that the anticipation of social reward or punishment is

<sup>11</sup> E. B. Holt, *Animal Drive and the Learning Process* (New York: Holt, 1931), chap. xx.

<sup>12</sup> N. E. Miller and J. Dollard, *Social Learning and Imitation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), chap. ii.



an important determinant of human behavior. We act not only on the basis of memory of past rewards or frustrations, as the principle of simple conditioning has shown, but often with even greater force on the basis of anticipated success and reward. Man, as we said before, is a goal-integrating animal; he sets up prospective lines of action in his own behavior.

Man's purposive behavior is anticipatory in two ways. He behaves, first, in accordance with the expectancies of others. Social pressures in the form of approval and disapproval guide his action to conform to the demands of the group. In the second place, he acts in accordance with goals that he has himself established. Expectancies in the form of ambitions and ideals, the level of aspiration in particular, serve as powerful agencies in directing the course of an individual's actions. Healthy adult behavior is never "purposeless" behavior. All mature personalities are describable by the concept of directionality. In her study of many life histories, Charlotte Buhler found that each person was definitely guiding his actions toward a selected goal; that each was impelled in his own special way—by his perceptual system we would say—to achieve what to him was a worthy objective.<sup>13</sup> The direction is not, of course, a straight line. Allport describes the propulsive power of anticipated ends as follows:

Lives plagued by bad luck may be forced to alter their objectives and to take a more modest goal (to lower their level of aspiration). Sometimes, on the other hand, there is grim persevering in the face of insuperable obstacles, a decision to continue in the selected road, *quand même*. Some defeated personalities seem bound to life merely "by indignation," but even this emotional focus serves as a goal for combat.<sup>14</sup>

The anticipatory quality of motivation is partly what lends to adult behavior its character of social responsibility. An individual is socially responsible not only to the degree that he can set up goals for his own seeking, but to the extent that he can anticipate the consequences of his own success or failure in their achievement. A life plan is only as good as the capacity of the individual to see the probable issue of his own efforts. Anticipation thus provides man with another instrument for making his life more intelligible, namely, the perspective afforded by long-range planning. We can see the consequence of its underdevelopment or absence etched deeply in

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<sup>13</sup> C. Bühler, *Der Menschliche Lebenslauf als Psychologisches Problem* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1933). This subject is summarized in English in E. Frenkel, "Studies in Biographical Psychology," *Character and Pers.*, 5 (1936), 1-34.

<sup>14</sup> Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 219. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.



the lives of those men who have no sense of direction—in despondent individuals, drifters, derelicts, and psychopaths. Being moved not even “by indignation,” they have no meaningful tie with life, and they live only in the present. They possess no pointers to the future, and so they can experience only the blank vacuity of the moment.

Viewed in the light of the concept of role perception, anticipation is the capacity of playing the role of another. One individual knows something of the psychological state of another because he has learned in his own imagination to see that other as an individual like himself. By seeing the other as someone like himself, the individual can anticipate the acts of the other and thereby make adequate adjustments to him. Anticipation makes role-acting possible and human behavior within limits predictable. Devoid of this anticipatory function man would neither be deeply social nor would group life be significantly ordered. One hardly exaggerates, therefore, if he declares that in the absence of anticipation human personality would be deprived of some of its most remarkable characteristics.

*Cultural patterning.* We shall now consider the cultural conditioning of individual motives. We might begin by declaring that *our motives are largely determined by the society in which we live*. While all of us come into the world possessed of the same organic heritage, our interests and determinations vary remarkably from society to society, and even from group to group in the same society. By way of a simple illustration, let us consider the motive of acquisitiveness. Acquisitiveness was thought not so long ago to be an inherent characteristic of man. Yet the Zuni Indians have no interest in acquiring property. The economic security which cooperation guarantees them makes the desire for possession unnecessary. Should we argue, with no evidence to support us, that they have acquisitive desires but inhibit or repress them, we have not invalidated the proposition that acquisitiveness is a social phenomenon culturally patterned. Should acquisitiveness be an organic drive, it is so profoundly modified by the cultural values and expectations that it loses its identity. Moreover, the form of expression which acquisitiveness takes must be acceptable to members of the group; where it goes counter to their expectancies it brings criticism or punishment upon the doer. There is an approved or acceptable manner for the expression of acquisitiveness as there is an approved or acceptable manner for ingesting one's food, imbibing one's liquid, or satisfying one's sexual needs.

In our brief analysis of the learning of motives, we have simplified the channelization of drives into motives. This process is complex in itself, and it makes up only one segment of man's overwhelmingly complex total be-



havior. We should bear in mind, therefore, that when a person seeks a goal he acts as a *total* striving personality, not as a partial being. When a person strives to satisfy his hunger, he is not seeking merely to reduce the tensions produced by muscular contractions in his stomach; he is trying to satisfy *himself*, and the energy discharged in the effort is the energy of the total individual. The whole set of attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and conations of the individual are engrossed in the task of reaching a desired end. Further yet, the perception of things and the whole outlook of the individual toward the future, as Maslow points out, tend to change. As he puts it:

For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be defined very simply as a place where there is plenty of food. He tends to think that, if only he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating. Anything else will be defined as unimportant. Freedom, love, community feeling, respect, philosophy, may all be waved aside as fripperies which are useless since they fail to fill the stomach. Such a man may fairly be said to live by bread alone.<sup>15</sup>

## Kinds of Motives

The beginning student of social psychology is invariably baffled by the variety of proposals for classifying human motives. He finds schemes such as Goldstein's, which propose a single and all-inclusive motive of "self-actualization."<sup>16</sup> He also finds schemes which propose about two dozen organic and psychological needs, such as that of Murray.<sup>17</sup> Actually, the number of motives listed in the classification does not matter. Classification is only a means of arranging the facets of a subject for more effective study. The particular system of arrangement is inconsequential. Thomas's four-fold classification of wishes has been widely used by sociologists, but many social psychologists feel that it does not do justice to the inordinate variety of human impulses. We propose to use Thomas's classification and to extend it beyond its original scope. All four wishes are social-psychological, for even those that are fundamentally organic achieve their relevance to human behavior by the manner in which they fit into the social perceptions of individuals, or by the social definitions that society imposes

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<sup>15</sup> Maslow, *op. cit.*, p. 374. Reprinted by permission of *Psychological Review* and American Psychological Association, Inc., Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> K. Goldstein, *The Organism* (New York: American Book, 1939).

<sup>17</sup> H. A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).



upon them.<sup>18</sup> Although we are basing our discussion on Thomas's classification of wishes, we shall call them motives.

**The Security Motive.** Of all human impulses, the security motive is in all probability primal and basic. During the last forty years research and clinical studies of this need have stressed its importance in the total psychic economy of the individual. Psychoanalysts almost without exception have recognized its vital role, and modern clinical psychology, child psychology, and the mental hygiene movement find it indispensable for normal adjustment. Some fifteen years ago, Krout, in a study of the expression of the four wishes in the daily activities of over 150 subjects, found that the wish for security was expressed most often.<sup>19</sup>

The wish for security is based on the need of the individual to shield himself from any threats to his integrity or stability. It manifests itself in the avoidance of danger and risk, in attitudes of caution and conservatism. Although Thomas did not examine the variety of needs that belong in the category of security, we shall do so.

**Physiological needs.** The importance of physiological needs in the total life-activities of an individual has been exaggerated. Except in cases of extreme deprivation, such as starvation, hunger is not a vital force in behavior. It is aroused only periodically, and when the hunger is satisfied the person feels secure. Hunger, thirst, sex, elimination, and the like are emergency conditions and do not chronically activate an individual.

The expression of physiological needs is substantially affected by cultural pressures and expectations. Everywhere these functions are regulated by customs, as we saw in our description of the basic disciplines. There are rules for proper ways of eating, and the time and place for the exercise of this function are culturally determined. Incitement to eating is far less determined by the rhythmic action of the stomach wall or the energy needs of the human body than by the folkways of the group. Whether we eat one meal or three, or at one time rather than another, is a matter socially prescribed. The study of societies other than our own has made this abundantly clear.<sup>20</sup> Generally, dinner is served late in European cities—at eight-thirty in Vienna and at nine o'clock in Madrid. In primitive societies the customs

<sup>18</sup> The "four wishes" are discussed at length in the following two works: W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, 5 vols. (Boston: Badger, 1918-1920) and W. I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1923).

<sup>19</sup> M. H. Krout. "Wish and Behavior," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 29 (1934), 253-268.

<sup>20</sup> See B. Malinowski, "The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 44 (1939), 938-964.



vary even more. Tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo district eat whenever their fancy dictates, by day or by night. The Ona tribe has no fixed meals; instead, the fire is kept burning all day and anyone desiring to eat roasts himself a snack, usually at short intervals.<sup>21</sup> Each society prohibits certain foods. American society teaches a feeling of revulsion at the mere thought of eating a rat or a snake; yet some societies value these animals as nourishing foods. The literature of anthropology is full of testimony in support of the proposition that food and its consumption are social as well as physiological phenomena.<sup>22</sup>

The impact of culture upon human drives is nowhere more pronounced than in the realm of sex. Although in some societies it is taken for granted, in others it has profound religious significance. In America it is still in the rather paradoxical position of being a degrading function and a romantic dream. Men everywhere regard sexual intercourse not only as a biological but also as a social phenomenon. They encourage and sanction some forms of sexual behavior and discourage and condemn others.

Sexual modesty has until recently been regarded as instinctive, and religion has tended to fortify this view. Evidence from ethnology has now shattered this belief completely. There are people who associate no shame whatever with the sexual function. They talk about it as naturally as they talk about rain or sunshine. In the Trobriand Islands children in play imitate their elders in the practice of coitus, much to the latter's good-humored enjoyment.<sup>23</sup> Briffault points out that in many societies people go about fully naked with no regard for the presence of others. In terms of their standards of conduct, this is entirely natural and normal.<sup>24</sup> Shame may be exhibited regarding the "exposure" of other parts of the body, but not with that of the sexual organs. Klineberg cites the case of a group of Australian women who were ashamed to be seen by white men with their headdress in disarray but who exhibited no modesty in appearing naked before them.<sup>25</sup>

Attitudes toward premarital chastity differ enormously from culture to culture. They have changed remarkably in the United States in the last fifty years, more particularly since the first World War. Statistical evidence supports the conclusion that premarital intercourse has been increasing

<sup>21</sup> R. H. Lowie, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Rinehart, 1940), p. 64.

<sup>22</sup> See C. Wissler, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* (New York: Holt, 1929).

<sup>23</sup> B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in Northwestern Melanesia* (New York: Liveright, 1929), pp. 52-59.

<sup>24</sup> R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1927).

<sup>25</sup> O. Klineberg, *Race Differences* (New York: Harper, 1935), chap. xv.



rapidly. This change is particularly noticeable in the case of women.<sup>26</sup> In some societies premarital chastity is greatly admired; in others people show a complete indifference; and in still others it is a liability. Trobriand women practice chastity only after marriage. Before marriage they are free to indulge in sexual intercourse, and spending their nights in a "bachelor house" is regarded as a natural prelude to eventual marriage.<sup>27</sup> Among the northern Bantu people of Africa, premarital pregnancy is a proof of fertility and increases a woman's chances of marrying.<sup>28</sup>

The fear of incest seems to be universal. Yet evidence exists that it has not always been feared. Among Peruvian and Hawaiian royalty, as Lowie points out, the mating of brothers with sisters was not uncommon. While incest is the exception, such exceptions, as Lowie remarks, "like the breach of these rules by hardened sinners in modern civilization, suggest that the horror of incest is not inborn, though it is doubtless a very ancient cultural feature."<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the sexual object is not universally someone of the opposite sex. Homosexuality is a widespread practice and its status differs in different cultures, and in different groups within the same culture. In our own society homosexuality is against the mores, and in some communities legal action is brought against those who practice it. Judging by Kinsey's Report, however, it is practiced extensively in the "normal" population.<sup>30</sup> Homosexuality was highly esteemed among the ancient Greeks. Aristotle even suggested the possibility of "male companionship" as a way to restrict overpopulation.<sup>31</sup>

We have gone into considerable detail regarding the physiological needs and their channelization by social custom, more particularly regarding the sex drive, in order to impress upon the reader the inordinate degree to which an organic function is modified by social pressures.

*Safety needs.* This term, borrowed from Maslow, refers to all the

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<sup>26</sup> L. M. Terman, et al., *Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938).

<sup>27</sup> Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, pp. 69-75.

<sup>28</sup> J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu* (New York: Putnam, 1915).

<sup>29</sup> Lowie, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>30</sup> A. C. Kinsey, et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948), pp. 199-201. See also K. B. Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women* (New York: Harper, 1929).

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*. Trans. by Susemihl and R. D. Hicks (London, 1894). See especially J. A. Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (London: Privately printed, 1901), pp. 30-47.



activities which safeguard the individual from various internal and external threats, such as loss of love, rejection, dangers of various sorts, illness and pain.<sup>32</sup> For many people, and certainly for most children, the family offers a high degree of security. This is particularly true of a family in which a considerable measure of order, harmony, and good will prevail. Where the opposite conditions are prominent, as is the case in a conflict-ridden home, where there has been divorce or bereavement, or where an extremely harsh discipline is practiced, the child feels threatened, harassed, and afraid. The growing child feels most secure in a friendly and familiar atmosphere. When he is confronted by the novel, the strange, or the unexpected, his tensions become increasingly more unmanageable.

In a very real sense some safety needs of an adult are better provided for today than they were a generation ago, and others are not so well provided for now as then. A generation ago man was much more threatened by the disastrous economic consequences of unemployment, illness, accident, old age, and the like, than he is today. On the other hand, his security is now increasingly endangered by war, with its threat of large-scale destruction and annihilation; by the abrogation of individual freedom at the hands of tyrants and dictators; and by a general feeling of helplessness in the face of impending events over which he has no effective control.

*Belief and conformity.* Belief is an attitude closely related to motivation. Indeed, belief is a powerful motivating force in society, for it is commonly the source of enduring safety. While all people find in belief a degree of security, it is of extraordinary importance to the person whose life is dominated by the wish for security. Having somehow never outgrown the "primitive credulity" of his childhood, he clings strongly, sometimes abnormally, to familiar ideas. He persists in his old beliefs partly out of the need for conformity, which in itself is a safety-providing mechanism, and partly because of the fear of the unfamiliar. The desire to believe is a potent motivating force in men's lives. They hold on to their beliefs, very often against damaging evidence, because they provide security for the individual. The same motivation underlies the need for conformity. When a man lives in accordance with the customs of his group, he is acting on the basis of the safe and the familiar. His behavior is approved by his group, and their sanction increases his sense of belongingness and safety.

A quarter of a century ago F. H. Lund performed an experiment in which the motivating force of beliefs was nicely demonstrated. Later experiments and investigations by others have confirmed his findings. He

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<sup>32</sup> Maslow, *op. cit.*, pp. 376 ff.



drew up a set of thirty questions regarding his subjects' religious, moral, political, and scientific beliefs. He asked them to indicate the strength of their *belief* in connection with each question and the extent to which they might *desire* the content of the propositions to be true. He found a strong tendency for belief in a given proposition to be correlated with a desire for the propositions to be true.<sup>33</sup>

Men cling to beliefs, create myths and legends about man and his place in the world, and in various ways explain their failures to their own satisfaction (witness rationalization), because these beliefs provide them with security. The pressure for conformity and the lack of originality or creativeness which characterize most people may very well be correlated with a potent wish for security. The need to conform overpowers the wish for novelty and change, and the individual persists along a safe line of action but one which issues in simple mediocrity. As Allport so well put it in expounding the nature of expressive behavior: "Effort to do a task *correctly* destroys the impulse to do it stylistically, and any deliberate attempt to disguise expression markedly inhibits its individual character."<sup>34</sup>

When the individual's physiological tensions in the form of hunger, thirst, elimination, and sexual expression, his safety needs, and beliefs are "adequately" reduced or satisfied he is said to feel secure. Adjustments to the social milieu and to the discomforts of his organic stresses constitute no unusual difficulties or threats, and he can live in relative peace with himself and the world. When frustrations of these wishes are too intense or too numerous, the person may become seriously disturbed. The world takes on an unfriendly and sinister aspect, a chronic and dangerous appearance.

**The Response Motive.** This wish is closely related to and yet different from the wish for security. Response experiences may reinforce the feeling of security, but they are not its source. A person feels secure when he is relatively free of the threats to his being, such as loss, deprivation, or danger; but his desire for response is not for this reason gratified. An individual craves response even when his security is fully vouchsafed. The wish for response is the desire for intimate and friendly contacts with others. It is the desire to be loved or appreciated in a personal way. A person feels relatively contented and is adequately adjusted when he has established affectionate relations with others. In contrast to the sexual drive, which can be gratified by the reduction of purely physiological ten-

<sup>33</sup> F. H. Lund, "The Psychology of Belief," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 20 (1925), 63-81, 174-196.

<sup>34</sup> Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 467.



sions, the wish for response can be satisfied only through close identification with others.

By virtue of the fact that the human infant grows up in almost complete dependence upon those of his immediate environment, he develops, in the normal course of conditioning and cross-conditioning, strong affective bonds for them. As the individual matures, the circle of affective ties expands to include many people, such as friends, companions, and associates. The "generalized other" or community interest comes eventually to be incorporated into the affective response system of the individual. Fellowship, cooperativeness, and belongingness are its most common expressions. In the absence or circumvention of these affective ties, the individual feels lonely, forsaken, homesick, or despondent. The yearning of the man for his mate, of the mother for her child, of the lover for his beloved are well-known expressions of the wish for response in our society. Like the wish for security, the wish for response takes several forms.

*The "tender" sentiments.* It is rather widely assumed that the love of a parent for his offspring, particularly the love of a mother for her child, is an innate and universal affection. Similarly it is assumed by most normal Americans that romantic love, if not innate, is certainly universal. Neither of these beliefs is supported by evidence. On the contrary, there is much evidence to show that the assumptions are groundless. Aside from the physiological need of the female to relieve herself of the discomfort of lactic pressure in her breasts, there is no evidence of an innate need to suckle and crave for the young. That the maternal impulse is widespread, there can be no doubt. But the motivating force behind the desire for and love of children finds a fuller explanation on the basis of social influences. The widespread practice of infanticide and the severe punishment of children call attention to the cultural pattern of maternal behavior. The putting to death of children is found in many simple cultures, and is not uncommon in China today. It might legitimately be objected that infanticide is often motivated on economic grounds and hence does not invalidate the claim of the biological origin of maternal behavior. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this behavior is significantly influenced by social imperatives.

A more crucial question regarding maternal behavior is posed by Klineberg. He is concerned with the emotions and attitudes of people who put their children to death. If, for example, they are impelled to kill their children by economic necessity but are unhappy about their deed, their behavior must be explained on other than economic grounds. The ethnologist who reports the behavior of preliterate peoples, Klineberg points out, is



more concerned with the overt act of killing the child than with the attitude or emotion which may have accompanied it.<sup>35</sup>

The brutal mistreatment of children which goes under the name of discipline casts further doubt on the "natural" love of a parent for his offspring. The socialization of children through corporal punishment is alien to many primitive people. The Zuni Indians treat their children tenderly and never use physical punishment.<sup>36</sup> Klineberg calls attention to the fact that Eskimos believe that white people do not deserve to have children, "since they are so heartless as to strike them."<sup>37</sup> He adds that in Tahiti a white man who beat his own child was almost put to death by the natives. Yet in our own society severe corporal punishment in the form of beatings and floggings were common until rather recently, and are still resorted to by some individuals. Thus, whether or not there is an innate biological urge to have and to love children, the forms of its manifestation are largely determined by cultural standards.

*Romantic love.* The social pattern of the love-life in our society is that of monogamous marriage. The dominant characteristic of monogamous marriage in the United States is romantic choice as a means to marriage. This romantic choice consists of a whole complex of emotions and attitudes which may be called the *romantic complex*. This complex is a pattern of emotions and attitudes in which the sexual impulse is sublimated to the point where its goal, the love-object and love-experience, is idealized to the point where it no longer corresponds to reality.

According to Henry Osborne Taylor, the historian, romantic love has not always characterized the amorous life of Western man. In ancient Greece and Rome it was carried on as an extramarital attachment to courtesans. In the Christian era love between the sexes was fortified by the idealization of woman, as manifested in the worship of the Virgin; and by the twelfth century it had developed into a cultural complex. Romantic love became the sanctioned pattern in which men displayed their chivalry on the battlefield; and it took the form of ardent attachments to courtly women, many of whom were already married.<sup>38</sup>

At the beginning of the Modern Age this pattern of romantic love was

<sup>35</sup> O. Klineberg, *Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1940), p. 71.

<sup>36</sup> A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 112.

<sup>37</sup> Klineberg, *Social Psychology*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> H. O. Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1911), Vol. I. chap. xx.



adopted by the rising middle class, by whom it became linked with monogamy. With the emancipation of the individual from family control, marriage reflected the "revolt of youth against the domination of the parents in the arrangement of marriage."<sup>39</sup>

Today romantic love is the criterion by which we evaluate the success of a marriage. It is perpetually glorified in poetry and song, in the movies and fiction, and in a variety of other ways. Our society extols it far more than any other culture. Yet many groups regard this violent emotional attachment as unfortunate, and not a few describe it as abnormal. Linton describes the situation in America amusingly:

The hero of the modern American movie is always a romantic lover just as the hero of the old Arab epic is always an epileptic. A cynic might suspect that in any ordinary population the percentage of individuals with a capacity for romantic love of the Hollywood type was about as large as that of persons able to throw genuine epileptic fits. However, given a little social encouragement, either one can be adequately imitated without the performer admitting even to himself that the performance is not genuine.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, while it fulfills an important need in American society, romantic love, like most things *human*, is a learned response. The *Sehnsucht*, or longing, of which the poets speak is largely a product of the romantic tradition. It is social as much as it is individual. When the need of love and acceptance from others is satisfied, the individual tends to be, other things being equal, a well-adjusted person. When the need is chronically thwarted, maladjustment is a frequent outcome.

*Other response motives.* Having been conditioned to respond to those who ministered to him in his childhood, the human being's interactions with others become positively toned. Although he becomes progressively more selective in his associations with others as he matures, the individual finds contact with others pleasant. *Sociability* has characterized man ever since he has been man. Although sociability is universal, it is socially acquired. While the exact mechanism at work in impelling a person to respond sympathetically to another person is obscure, it is reasonable to suppose that sociability is an extension of the earlier familial interactions. If those early social interactions were accompanied by positively toned feelings, the person tends to extend these feelings to others.

<sup>39</sup> E. R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), pp. 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> R. Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1936), p. 175. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



He likes to associate with people as an adult for the same reason that he liked to associate with members of his family when he was a child. Man, then, is a "social animal," not because he was *born* that way but because he has *become* that way.

Man is also characterized as a *cooperative* individual with *community feeling*. The wish for response is gratified for many people by a close feeling of identification with others which enables them sympathetically to carry on activities in concert. Men get affective satisfaction by devotion to others in the form of group loyalty and participation in community welfare. All of the foregoing modes of behavior in one way or another and to some degree satisfy man's wish for response.

**The New Experience Motive.** The security motive, when analyzed into its basic directionality, is a motive of fear or withdrawal.

The new experience motive, on the other hand, is characterized by approach. The individual dominated by the wish for new experience needs security and stability less than he needs novelty and change. The earliest manifestations of the motive of new experience are found in the prowling activities of children. By the time a child can walk sufficiently to increase his area of locomotion, he shows great interest and curiosity in exploring bureau drawers, closets, and the space behind doors. Later the need manifests itself in the pursuit of pleasure, in the seeking of knowledge, or in the striving for ideals. When the motive is strong, the individual tends to be unconventional or irresponsible. If his behavior takes the form of the unconventional, he may transform his experiences into highly esteemed social values, such as artistic productiveness or scientific discovery. On the other hand, if his behavior takes the form of eccentricity or social irresponsibility, it may result largely in personal instability or disorganization.

**Sexual varietism.** Man has been described as a promiscuous animal. We have already shown that attitudes toward chastity differ widely throughout the world. In this section we are not concerned primarily, however, with the problem of chastity but with a habitual sexual experimentation that characterizes some people. Sexual varietism is a socially conditioned attitude or habit of irresponsible sexual striving without regard to consequences. The person who seems to have little else to live for but the release of sexual tensions, whose sexual strivings are neither socially beneficial nor individually enhancing, exemplifies an "aimless" sexual varietism. He goes from one sexual object to another like the bee that flits from flower to flower, only with less "purpose."

A more "refined" form of this same sexual varietism is found in the perennial Don Juan who is driven in restless pursuit of the perfect sexual object.



His fundamental aim is sexual conquest. He prides himself on his amorous affairs and boasts of his conquests. Like many individuals who are motivated by the desire for new experience, he is psychologically unformed, poorly integrated, and arrested in his affective-sexual development. He fits well the archetype whom Thomas and Znaniecki call the "Bohemian."

*The noetic impulse.* "Curiosity" was one of the important impulses in the classical instinct theory of human behavior. We have already called attention to the exploratory or prowling interests of small children. The desire to know, the need to understand, seems to be a strong motive in human behavior. This statement, however, must be made with caution. Maslow questions whether the desire for knowledge and understanding is present in everyone. It appears that its presence has thus far been established in those people whom Maslow has had an opportunity to study clinically. These are all people of considerable intelligence. We have no information as to whether the desire for knowledge is found in unintelligent people. Until this gap in our knowledge has been filled, we must assert, Maslow believes, that the desires to know and to understand may be "largely a function of relatively high intelligence."<sup>41</sup>

The noetic impulse is not only the desire to acquire knowledge but also to comprehend man and his place in the scheme of things. As Maslow says, man needs to put the facts into a system, to search for "meanings," as the philosophers phrase it. The noetic impulse is, however, not only a cognitive but even more fundamentally a motivational factor, and as such it is as much a personality need as the more basic desires.

*Self-actualization.* The present writer has found Goldstein's concept of self-actualization, especially as it is employed by Maslow, so useful in thinking about the problem of motivation and its relation to personality that he has been led to the conclusion that it belongs among the motivational categories. An individual motivated by self-actualization needs new experience. He tends to be unconventional, spontaneous, and not too much concerned with the opinions of him held by others. More than security and response, he needs to be above all else himself.<sup>42</sup> But unlike the irresponsible individual who disregards group standards out of self-assertive protest or rebellion, the self-actualizing individual is unconventional because it is the only way in which his growth can be effected.

<sup>41</sup> Maslow, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

<sup>42</sup> For a comprehensive description of self-actualizing people see the article by A. H. Maslow: "Self-Actualizing People: A Study of Psychological Health," *Symposia on Topical Issues*, No. 1, pp. 11-34.



Again, in contrast to the Bohemian's narrow self-seeking and self-centeredness, the strivings of the self-actualizing individual are characterized by sociability—by identification, sympathy, and affection for others. Finally, unlike the irresponsible Bohemian who seeks new experience out of sheer inner restlessness, or out of the lack of an organized sense of direction, the self-actualizing individual's need for the different or the novel lies in his need of growth—of becoming more and more what he potentially already is. He *must* be what he *can* be.<sup>43</sup>

This description agrees with our conclusion that the individual ordinarily does not desire a defense of the self only, but also self-enhancement. The new experience motive impels man to change and grow toward a realization of his self-image. In the striving for new experience, particularly for self-actualization, the person more nearly achieves full individuality than by means of any other of the four wish-motives. At the same time, the self-actualizing individual, unlike the other new-experience motivated individuals, is also highly socialized, as we have seen, since his self is always sensitive to the selves of others.

*Other new experience motives.* Among the other forms of behavior motivated by the wish for new experience is *self-assertiveness*.

Simple self-assertiveness is probably always motivated by the need to overcome the routines and barriers of daily living. It is part of the spirit of enthusiasm which impels our activities to spill over into efforts beyond that demanded by the immediate task before us, or to overcome the barriers which restrain our healthy energies. *Domination* is self-assertiveness extended to increase our mastery over the assertiveness of others. *Pugnacity* finally, is the desire for new experience that leads to self-aggrandizement and to a denial of new experience and self-expression to others.

**The Recognition Motive.** Probably no other human motive has played as powerful a role in the creation of human values as the desire for recognition. In contrast to the response motive, which is a desire for affectional response, the recognition motive is a desire for distinction in the eyes of the group or society in which we live. It is manifested in such common forms of behavior as courage and self-display through dress, ornament, opinion, and knowledge. It underlies our ambition, vanity, will-to-power, and desire for undying fame. We shall consider a few of the important recognition motives.

*Self-esteem.* Since we have discussed self-esteem in considerable detail in the preceding chapter, we shall pause only long enough to

<sup>43</sup> Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," p. 382.



show its function of satisfying the recognition motive. Every normal being desires, and in order to remain normal he needs, an acceptable evaluation of himself. Self-esteem is largely an individual's attitude to other people's opinion of himself. It is the basis of all self-confidence. In order to achieve and maintain an adequate self-picture the individual will, therefore, struggle to achieve those values which society holds in high esteem. Failure to achieve them results in self-depreciation and a sense of inferiority. Few things are more severely thwarting and threatening to the self than the disesteem of others. There is abundant evidence showing that pathological behavior is frequently induced by the thwarting of the desire for self-esteem. Accordingly one should expect every individual to strive with all his might to attain, hold on to, and enhance it. From our point of view it is, therefore, a basic factor in the psychology of motivation.<sup>44</sup>

*Status.* Most of the important investigations on status have been performed by sociologists and anthropologists.<sup>45</sup> During the past decade social psychologists have been showing increasing interest in the subject, especially as it influences personality and attitudes.<sup>46</sup> Status may be defined simply as the relative position or standing ascribed to an individual by the group. Its social-psychological importance lies in the fact that an individual evaluates himself on the basis of this ascribed position. A more psychological definition of status, then, would be to say that it is the "relationship between a person's interiorized values and the norms of his society."<sup>47</sup>

From this definition it is clear that every person possesses status—high, intermediate, or low. With this status is bound up a very important psychological fact, namely, that a person's social self and his esteem in the eyes of others are tied up with his status. The kind and degree of recognition

<sup>44</sup> Kurt Koffka so conceives it. See his *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935).

<sup>45</sup> See for example A. Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," *Am. Sociol. Rev.*, 6 (1941), 345-356; A. Davis and J. Dollard, *Children of Bondage* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1940); M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: Morrow, 1935); W. L. Warner and P. S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

<sup>46</sup> See for example, R. Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949); H. H. Hyman, "The Psychology of Status," *Arch. Psychol.*, 1942, No. 269; M. Sherif and H. Cantril, *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (New York: Wiley, 1947); M. Sherif, *An Outline of Social Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1948).

<sup>47</sup> H. Cantril, *The Psychology of Social Movements* (New York: Wiley, 1941), p. 42.



which he has in the eyes of others depends to a large extent on the position which he occupies in the status hierarchy. The attitudes of superiority and inferiority are determined in no small degree by an individual's status. Hence the preservation or enhancement of one's status takes on great importance.

*Prestige.* This need is closely related to status. It may be thought of as an extension and psychological intensification of the status-need.

Ethnologists know of only two cultures in which it plays only a minor role. The Zuñi Indians of our Southwest discourage any important ability or achievement that might get the individual prestige or recognition in the eyes of others.<sup>48</sup> Inconspicuousness in all things is valued highly. Among the Arapesh of New Guinea, distinction in the public eye, say through leadership or authority, is looked upon as an inescapable evil which one must endure because of one's obligation to the community. Thus, the father will relinquish the unpleasant duty of familial authority as soon as his eldest son is ready to take on the responsibility.

The quest for prestige is, however, almost universal. The sources of prestige differ considerably from group to group. In the United States, prestige is obtained most widely through economic position and power. In England, royalty has the highest prestige; in France, intellectual and artistic achievements rank high; while in Germany, until recently at least, military prowess and glory had an honored place second to none.

Whatever the sources of prestige may be, it is highly prized by most people and has important effects on the self-attitudes of an individual. For this reason the social psychologist is highly interested in it.

This completes our description and analysis of the "four wishes," the motives which we assume methodologically to be the basis of man's behavior. These four motivating forces are sufficiently comprehensive and at the same time specific to permit us to describe human behavior everywhere. They are to some extent characteristic of people in all cultures, because people everywhere undergo similar experiences. More specifically, they are found to a degree everywhere because in every human group the need to defend the self, to preserve the image of the self, is an inescapable part of social living. As culture and social expectancies change, these motives will change with them. They are not final. They are determined in the long run by the field of social values and norms that operate in a group. When this

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<sup>48</sup> For the Zuñis, see R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934). For the Arapesh, see M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*.



field of social values and norms changes, the motives to which they give rise will also change.

Viewed from the perspective of adjustment, the evidence suggests that all the four motives must have some degree of expression if the individual is to lead a normal and satisfying life. The security of both the person and society depends on the opportunities which life provides for the realization of these fundamental wishes.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have been dealing with the dynamics of human behavior, with the problem of human motivation. We have been considering a very old question: What makes an individual behave the way he does? Today we no longer answer the question by attributing behavior to the operation of innate forces such as instincts. We describe behavior in terms of goal-integration; i.e., in terms of the necessity of the individual to satisfy needs, seek goals, and reduce tensions. The goals, needs, and tensions are conditioned in a multiplicity of ways by the social and cultural forces that are operative in a particular social milieu. Needs, wishes, goals, and the like must not be conceived as absolute and invariable propulsive forces. While every need has its history, its present satisfaction is determined by the properties of the psychological field of the moment. In this way we are ascribing great potency to both the individual and the society in the dynamics of human behavior. One cannot stress too often the determining effect of culture upon the individual's motives. But in the absence of aspirations and goals that are determined by the psychological field of the moment, culture itself would not exist. Motives are "directional thrusts toward satisfaction."<sup>49</sup> The satisfactions themselves make up a large part of culture. Thus, if there were no motives there would be no culture; and if there were no culture our motives would not be what they are. We would still be hungry and thirsty, we would seek the release of other physiological tensions, but the manner of expressing them would be different. Society channelizes our basic drives into prescribed satisfactions and so transforms them into forms of behavior which, while historically connected with the organic urges, are markedly different from them. If behavior is predictable at all, it is predictable only when we know both the tensions which impel a person to action and the cultural situation in which the tensions operate. A fruitful study of motivation cannot be made if we stress one aspect of the total process of directional striving and neglect the other. Psychologists have tended on the whole to commit the former error, and sociologists the latter. Social psychology cannot afford to commit either one, but to look upon motivation as a

<sup>49</sup> R. S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), p. 48.



total process of interaction of the individual-in-environment or of the person-in-society.

Society is not, however, only a channelizer of human motives. It does not merely redirect biological drives or urges into socially approved and socially desired expressions. *Society also creates new motives*, new wants and interests. To this extent society is also a *creative* force in human behavior. Many of the desires of men have little or nothing to do with the individual *as such*, but are products of the fact that there are other people who value certain objects which therefore become valuable to him. The desire for wealth or esteem, for power or fame, are motivating forces in individuals because society sets great store by them. The ends of human action are not only the reduction of physiological tensions but even more urgently the promotion of society's needs. Biological self-interest is transformed into social well-being.



## CHAPTER 7:

# Attitudes and Behavior

THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIST, we suspect, must approach the psychology of attitudes with both eagerness and trepidation. There is no problem in the whole area of social psychology which has held a more sustained interest, and none which is more chaotic. The subject has been so extensively and controversially treated by sociologists, psychologists, and social psychologists that the student of the subject well-nigh despairs of injecting order into the large mass of published material.

Although the concept of attitudes is probably the central and most widely discussed topic in contemporary American psychology, as Allport contends, it is by no means of merely recent interest.<sup>1</sup> As far as can be

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<sup>1</sup> See G. W. Allport, "Attitudes," in C. Murchison, ed., *A Handbook of Social Psychology* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1935), chap. xvii.



determined, the earliest use of the term is found in sociological writings. According to Droba, who examined fifty-five early textbooks in sociology, psychology, and social psychology, Giddings, a pioneer American sociologist, was the first to use the term, in his *Principles of Sociology*, published in 1896.<sup>2</sup> In psychology the term was first used by J. Orth, of the Würzburg school of psychology, in 1903.<sup>3</sup> The term employed by Orth was *Bewusstseinslagen*, or "conscious attitudes."<sup>4</sup> It was introduced into American social psychology by Thomas and Znaniecki in their five-volume work, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918-1920), to which we have referred on several occasions.<sup>5</sup> Psychologists had used the terms *mental set* and *determining tendency* some years before, and these terms, though referring primarily to kinaesthetic behavior, were roughly equivalent to the term *attitude*. By 1919, according to Droba, it was used by H. C. Warren.<sup>6</sup> In that year Warren published a textbook that was widely used in the 1920's.<sup>7</sup> Whether as a consequence of the appearance of the term in Warren's book, or for some other reason, the term *attitude* took on added respectability in American psychological circles. This should not blind us, however, to the historical fact that most of the early work on attitudes was performed by American sociologists.<sup>8</sup> Among these Thomas and Znaniecki deserve especial mention. We must agree with Allport's estimation of their role in bringing the concept of attitudes to the center of social-psychological investigation. He writes: "The credit for instituting the concept of attitude as a permanent and central feature in sociological writing must be assigned to Thomas and Znaniecki (1918), who gave it systematic priority in their monumental study of Polish peasants."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> D. D. Droba, "The Nature of Attitude," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 4 (1933), 444-463.

<sup>3</sup> E. G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1929), p. 395.

<sup>4</sup> J. Orth, "Gefühl und Bewusstseinslage," *Abhand. Geb. Pedagog. u. Physiol.*, 1903.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. III, "Introduction." <sup>6</sup> Droba, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>7</sup> H. C. Warren, *Human Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919).

<sup>8</sup> See for example, R. Bain, "An Attitude on Attitude Research," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 33 (1927), 940-957, and "Theory and Measurement of Attitudes and Opinions," *Psychol. Bull.*, 27 (1930), 357-379; L. L. Bernard, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1926), chap. xvi; E. S. Bogardus, *Fundamentals of Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1931); E. Faris, "Are Instincts Data or Hypotheses?" *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 27 (1921), 184-196; Faris, "The Concept of Social Attitudes," *J. Appl. Sociol.*, 9 (1925), 404-409; Faris, "Attitudes and Behavior," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 34 (1928), 271-281; and Faris, "The Concept of Social Attitudes," in K. Young, ed., *Social Attitudes* (New York: Holt, 1931).

<sup>9</sup> Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 802.



*We should like to amend this statement with the assertion that Thomas and Znaniecki were also instrumental in bringing the concept of attitude into the theories and researches of social psychology, and so helped to pave the way for bringing psychologists and sociologists together.*

## The Nature of Attitudes

Attitudes are as common and universal as the drives of hunger and thirst and as numerous as the objects toward which they are directed.

Provisionally we might conceive of them as the likes or dislikes of an individual. Thus a person may have a strong liking for liquor, or an *intense aversion for caviar*. We might then say that he has strong positive and *negative "attitudes" toward these objects*. His responses to these objects regulate the pattern of his behavior with reference to them. Again, by virtue of past conditioning or learning, an individual comes to react in positive and negative ways toward people and their ideas and beliefs. He might, for example, like his loquacious barber because he espouses "rugged individualism." An attitude of rejection or hostility toward people of different races or nationalities might predispose him to show aggressive behavior toward them.

Are the reactions of an individual toward such objects as food and political opinions both attitudes? This question reveals at once the difficulty and the confusion that surround the whole problem of attitudes.

**Some Definitions of Attitude.** We should like to note at the beginning that all recent definitions of attitudes ascribe an acquired quality to them. Attitudes are learned in experience; and, although they may be very general, they are always acquired in specific social-cultural situations. Also, it is necessary to bear in mind that definitions of attitude are usually based upon a general frame of reference, so that one must have some idea of what the definers' general theories of human behavior are.

**Postural response theory.** A postural response is an organic state of readiness. It consists of neuromuscular adjustments, of preparations for response set up in the neuromuscular system. The neuromuscular adjustment develops out of the interstimulation of individuals. Each person responds to other persons, who in turn respond to him. Out of this interaction, in which each person strives to build up in others a definite response to himself, there develops a set of attitudes of the one toward the others (the social self). An attitude, from this standpoint, not only includes the stimulus and response but even more so the preparations for



response set up in the neuromuscular system. It is indeed the preparation for response, the neuromuscular "set," that constitutes the attitude proper. An attitude, then, may be defined as a *preparation for action* in a certain direction. Thus, although a person may be tempted to walk out of a boring lecture (individual attitude), he politely remains seated and suffers to the end. He is "set" to go, but the demands of ordinary politeness inhibit his action (social attitude). This is roughly the theory of F. H. Allport.<sup>10</sup>

*Theory of mental set.* Most of the sociological theories fall into this category. It is based on a view of behavior which may be called the "conscious act" theory. The conscious act differs from a mechanical one, such as the neuromuscular theory of behaviorism, in that it "makes a difference to the individual experiencing it."<sup>11</sup> The knee-jerk following a stimulus to the patellar region produces no observable changes in the personality of an individual. The experience of a deep sorrow, however, involves important changes in his personality. A conscious act is prospective or intentional. Within this conscious act an attitude arises. Faris defines an attitude as "a tendency to act." It is, moreover, the activating or determining force of the course of behavior. The attitude "will determine the general character of the act."<sup>12</sup> In this sense an attitude is an indicator of a future act. It is the attitude, and not the act, that constitutes the prospective, intentional element in an integrated experience. An attitude, again, is a subjective state, whereas a conscious act is the realization of an attitude in action. The act is what the attitude means; the attitude means what the act does. This would be true under ideal conditions and completely objective knowledge of attitudes would then be possible. But no such one-to-one correspondence between attitude and behavior exists, as witnessed by such forms of behavior as insincerity and hypocrisy. Exact prediction of behavior from attitudes is accordingly impossible. This fact makes "subjectivism" in the present stage of knowledge inescapable and a strict behaviorism impossible.

*General theories.* Droba describes the views of such writers as Dewey and Lundberg as "general theories." These theories stress the belief that an attitude is a general, rather than a specific, preparation to action. This description more particularly applies to Dewey's view, for whom an attitude is latent and requires positive stimulation to set it into action.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> F. H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), chap. xiii.

<sup>11</sup> Faris, "Attitudes and Behavior," p. 275.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>13</sup> J. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Holt, 1922), p. 41.



*Attitude as an implicit response.* Not much would be gained from discussions of still other theories. It is sufficient to point out that the foregoing theories, as well as some others which we have not mentioned, emphasize tendency, preparation, adjustment, and the like, toward certain objects. Whether we use the language of neuromuscular set or the terminology of mentalistic tendency-to-act, the essential factor is the same: an attitude is a *preparatory* activity. It involves anticipation, trial response, incompleting adjustment, a state of readiness. For this reason an attitude may be defined as an *implicit response or predisposition to act toward or away from an individual or social value*. Being preparatory, it is always on the verge of action, a *potential adjustment toward* an object or situation. Accordingly, once the attitude is expressed or the desired adjustment is made, it ceases to have any activating effect upon the individual, although it may remain in the individual's memory or become his permanent or habitual set. When the preparation and execution of the act coincide, the result is a completed act, the adjustment of an individual to an object or value. An attitude is not, therefore, an isolated disposition but the preparatory phase of a psychological continuum of which adjustment is the end-product. The writing of these lines, for example, is a process of adjustment to the impelling need to give expression to certain facts and ideas. It involves not only the writer's knowledge and thinking but his disposition toward the whole complex of writing, editing, and publishing and the need to clarify his thoughts to students and teachers. Preparatory to the act of writing, then, is an attitude or set of attitudes regarding the various features in the total process of putting the writer's ideas, feelings, etc., upon the paper before him. When the lines are at last written, the preparatory activities have been transformed into a successful mode of adjustment. The *intent* to write is the attitude; the *act* of writing is the ensuing adjustment or realization of an attitude in action. If writing does not take place, the attitude, the anticipation or trial response, still exists as a potential act or disposition to write.

An attitude is thus, as we pointed out earlier, a determining tendency, or "set," which predisposes a person to behave in certain ways toward specific objects. It facilitates adjustment to persons and situations in an individual's environment. Being a determining tendency, it cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred, with what success we can, from concrete responses or adjustments.

The student will see in this analysis a close relationship between attitudes and motives. A motive, we have said, is a psychic tension or restlessness.



Like an attitude, it is directed toward a goal. It is the conative, or striving, side of an attitude. It differs from an attitude in that it is, comparatively speaking, a short-lived psycho-organic set. Again, a motive can be satisfied whereas an attitude can only be expressed. A motive or desire is essentially conative; an attitude is fundamentally cognitive. The distinction may be illustrated by means of Faris's example whereby he distinguishes between the desire (motive) for, and the attitude toward, coffee. "A man," he writes, "may be said to have an attitude toward coffee . . . Having had three cups, and enjoyed them all, he still has an attitude, the same attitude, toward the object, coffee; but he does not, let us hope, wish for more. He may wish later. He has an attitude, but no wish."<sup>14</sup> The difference is a difference of function. A motive may be said to be the inciter of an act, a psychic *donator*; whereas an attitude determines the motive's direction.<sup>15</sup> This distinction should not blind us, however, to their similarities, for each is but a phase of a complete act.

Attitudes are also related to affective states, such as feelings and emotions. They are shot through with affective elements. We speak of affective attitudes toward others—attitudes of love, devotion, hatred, and fear. A man may like Republicans, hate Democrats, and fear Communists. He may like Protestants, tolerate Catholics, and disdain Jews. These are attitudes, but they are emotionally charged.

Emotions are thus involved in attitudes as secondary characteristics—secondary in that they may be accompaniments of attitudes, although they are not the same as attitudes. Emotions are stirred-up states, whereas attitudes are always potential or implicit. There is no such state as a potential or implicit emotion. A controlled emotion is not a potential emotion, but an emotion held in abeyance.

An attitude likewise, and for much the same reason, is not a sentiment. A sentiment is a set of emotions organized around objects, persons, or situations, and like an emotion it is not a tendency or preparation for action, but a stirred-up state.

**Attitudes and Traits.** The psychology of attitudes is complicated and obscured by another set of dispositions called traits. Traits, like attitudes, have been defined as determining tendencies. A determining tendency is a condition of readiness to respond. Allport orders his theory of traits to the concept of determining tendency as here defined.

<sup>14</sup> Faris, "Attitudes and Behavior," p. 279.

<sup>15</sup> Compare with Droba, *op. cit.*, p. 459.



Accordingly, he defines all traits as directive tendencies, but points out that not all directive tendencies are traits.<sup>16</sup> In other words some directive tendencies are attitudes. But presenting the matter this way does not make for clarity. Let us, therefore, look at the resemblances and differences between traits and attitudes. In this endeavor we follow closely Allport's descriptive comparison.

An attitude, first, has a specific referent, whereas a trait is a manner of behaving in the face of an attitude. Thus, one's view of Communism is an attitude, whereas one's friendly or hostile behavior regarding it is a trait. This conforms with our analysis of the nature of an attitude. We said earlier that an attitude is the set or preparatory activity toward an object or situation. When the preparatory activity is made and the individual has adjusted himself to the object or situation, the attitude is no longer active, although it may remain in memory or become a permanent habit of behaving. The permanent habit of behaving is the trait. A trait is always a generalized mode of response, whereas an attitude may be either general or specific and stimulus-bound.

In the second place, general or "widely extended attitudes" cannot be distinguished from traits. Examples of such widely extended attitudes which coalesce with traits are one's philosophy or one's attitude toward life or people in general.

Finally, unlike traits, attitudes usually have a clear focus or directionality. An individual's attitude may be friendly or unfriendly, accepting or rejecting. The directionality of traits is seldom clear-cut. They are less routinized and more individualized than attitudes.

Allport sums up the difference in the following statement:

Ordinarily *attitude* should be employed when the disposition is bound to an object or value, that is to say, when it is aroused by a well-defined class of stimuli, and when the individual feels toward these stimuli a definite attraction or repulsion. In some cases either of the terms (trait or attitude) is correct, as in the case of extroversion or patriotism . . . or conservatism or radicalism. If in the last two cases the object or value against which the person is rebelling, or which he is intent on conserving, can be specified, the term *attitude* is preferable. If, on the other hand, the radicalism or the conservatism is chronic and "temperamental," expressed in almost any sphere of the person's behavior, then the term *trait* fits the situation better. Narrow or specific attitudes are never traits. A man is fond of his dog; he has a kindly attitude toward it. But if in general he is thoughtful

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<sup>16</sup> C. W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Holt, 1937), p. 290.



of, and sympathetic toward men and beasts, he has a trait of kindness. The more generalized an attitude (the more difficult it is to specify its object or its polarity of affect), the more does it resemble a trait.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the simplest way to distinguish between an attitude and a trait is to say that generally an attitude has a specific referent, a definite goal or object toward which it is directed; whereas a trait, when it has a referent at all, is vague and undifferentiated. Thus honesty and aggressiveness are traits, for their referents are abstract and not clearly defined. Honest behavior, such as returning lost money to its owner, or an aggressive disposition, such as quarreling with one's wife, is a specific mode of adjustment; it is attitudinal behavior.

Young introduces a desirable sense of caution into the distinction between trait and attitude. It would be a mistake, he warns us, to think of traits "as some sort of free-floating features of conduct that have no reference to goals or objects outside oneself."<sup>18</sup> Traits may also have directionality; they are not always or entirely without a sense of direction. This is so in part because traits are not isolated characteristics of personality but are bound up with various aspects of the total behavioral process.

In view of the difficulty, despite all efforts toward clarity, of gaining a concise idea of the nature of attitudes, we must next examine the criteria by means of which attitudes may be defined and differentiated from other determining tendencies. It seems to the present writer that Sherif and Cantril, first in their article of 1945 and later in their joint volume on ego-involvements, have given us the best statement of the criteria of attitudes.<sup>19</sup> We shall present these criteria briefly.

*Attitudes have a subject-object relationship.* Attitudes always involve the relation of the individual to specific situations in his environment. These may consist of *objects*, such as one's automobile; *persons*, such as oneself or another; *groups*, such as the family or the community; *institutions*, such as a club or a church; and *values or norms*, such as democracy or communism.

*Attitudes are formed.* As we indicated earlier, attitudes are not innate predispositions to action. On the contrary, they are always

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

<sup>18</sup> K. Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> M. Sherif and H. Cantril, "The Psychology of 'Attitudes,'" *Psychol. Rev.*, 52 (1945), 295-319; and *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements* (New York: Wiley, 1947), pp. 19-23.



formed or conditioned in the individual's contact with his environment. This is no longer a debatable issue but an established fact. Thus, although everyone needs food to satisfy hunger and thereby survive as an organism, his preference for a particular food is acquired. Again, while almost any member of the opposite sex may satisfy a man's sexual need, when the need becomes attached to a particular person the attachment becomes an attitude. Furthermore, since attitudes are formed through contact in a perceptual situation, the primary stage in the formation of attitudes is a perceptual stage.

*Attitudes have affective properties.* We have already called attention to the affective quality of attitudes in the section on attitude as an implicit response. Attitudes are affectively charged because they are usually held in connection with such important values as the home, church, nation, or other sacred and hallowed institutions. They are affective, too, as Sherif and Cantril point out, because many of them are bound up with an individual's status and role in the community, such as worker, boss, or assistant.

*Attitudes are relatively enduring states of readiness.* Many of our daily needs, such as hunger and sexual tensions, are more or less momentary. A meal or a sexual object may be sufficient to satisfy these needs. The state of readiness disappears for a period when the needs are satisfied. Attitudes, on the other hand, are relatively enduring states of readiness. Thus, a meal may be the subject of praise for the cook, and a wife still holds affective attraction to her husband even after the sexual tension has been resolved.

In the section on attitude as an implicit response we declared that attitudes are essentially cognitive states, in contrast to motives, which are conative. This differential accounts for the relatively enduring character of attitudes. Attitudes tend to persist because of their cognitive quality. They arise in the perceptual experiences of an individual with objects, persons, or situations. They tend to be enduring because they are learned, i.e., because they are formed in the perception or grasp by an individual in his contact with others.

*Attitudes are as numerous and varied as the stimuli to which they refer.* This criterion we have also already called to the reader's attention. We pointed out that "attitudes are as numerous as the objects toward which they are directed." The validity of this criterion should be evident. If an attitude is an implicit response or state of readiness of response to objects, persons, or situations in one's environment, then clearly attitudes will vary with the number and variety of the responses



which the individual makes. Their number and variety is increased, furthermore, by their association with many objects, persons, or situations that were not necessarily involved in their inception. Even the expressed attitudes of others affect one's own attitudes. As Sherif and Cantril point out, once the value judgment of others that "Negroes are inferior" becomes incorporated into an individual's habit pattern, he easily relates this new attitude toward many specific situations regarding Negroes.

The nature of attitudes should now be clear. They are, briefly, implicit responses or predispositions, or states of readiness to act in a characteristic manner, to objects, persons, ideas, values, or situations in the social environment. They are conditioned or acquired in interaction with others in accordance with the principles of social learning. As such they form an important—some say the central—problem of social psychology.

**The Conditions of Attitude Formation.** If attitudes are learned, it should not be too difficult to discover the conditions under which the acquisition of attitudes takes place. That their nature depends upon the structure of the social-psychological field in which they arise seems to be clear, although the exact mechanisms involved in their origin and change is still obscure. We must therefore look for their origins in the individual's total experience within a social frame of reference.

Allport suggests four conditions of attitude formation, which Stagner describes by the following terms: integration, differentiation, trauma, and adoption.<sup>20</sup> We shall quote Stagner's illustration of the operation of these four conditions, which he borrowed from Davis's study on the development of 163 communist leaders in Russia.<sup>21</sup> Stagner writes:

Some . . . developed gradually to a communist position as a result of continued persecution, experiences with the representatives of the Czarist order, and so on (integration). Others were converted suddenly as a result of unusual, shocking, or painful experiences (trauma). A third group show in their development a preliminary stage of vague discontent and interest in various forms of unorthodox ideas, which ultimately become concrete and specific in communist activity (differentiation). Finally, there seemed to be considerable evidence that some of them had simply followed suggestions or examples of friends, teachers, or parents (adoption).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> G. W. Allport, "Attitudes"; R. Stagner, *Psychology of Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> See J. Davis, "Study of 163 Outstanding Communist Leaders," *Proc. Amer. Sociol. Soc.*, 24 (1930), 42-55.

<sup>22</sup> By permission from *Psychology of Personality*, by Ross Stagner. Copyright, 1948. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.



The acquisition of attitudes by adoption is clearly indicated by both observation and careful investigations. Sociologists have amply demonstrated the influence of the group, in the form of institutions and the whole community, in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of an individual.<sup>23</sup> Recent investigations by scholars of varied interests confirm the view that we form many of our attitudes through contact with the people and the mores of the community. Negative attitudes toward Negroes is a familiar example. The writer knows of two children who changed surprisingly from unquestioned acceptance of Negroes to expressed hostility. There were only positive and friendly attitudes expressed by the parents toward Negroes, and the children were fond of the Negro domestic who was engaged by the family to help with the household duties. Two years later the family moved to another community where Negro prejudice was strong. It was not long before the children displayed negative attitudes toward Negroes, complained that Negroes were "dirty" and "smelled," and in other ways expressed rejection of them for the color of their skin.

The research literature abundantly supports the foregoing observation. Typical of the disclosures are those of Blake and Dennis, showing both the development and gradual change in attitude formation. They found that the child acquires on the whole a negative attitude toward the Negro which disposes him to look upon him with criticism and disfavor. By the time he is grown up, experience has slightly modified his earlier stereotype, which permits him to attribute some favorable traits to the Negro, although on the whole he retains an inhibited unfavorable attitude toward Negroes in general.<sup>24</sup>

The unfavorable verbal judgments of members of the community toward Negroes predispose one to react to the latter in the same way. If the judgment of the group is that Negroes are not as good as white people and should be segregated, there is a strong possibility that a white individual

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<sup>23</sup> See for example the following: E. W. Burgess, ed., *Personality and the Social Group* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); C. H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York: Scribner, 1922); and *Social Organization* (New York: Scribner, 1909); E. Faris, *The Nature of Human Nature* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937); R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924); W. I. Thomas and D. S. Thomas, *The Child in America* (New York: Knopf, 1928).

<sup>24</sup> R. Blake and W. Dennis, "Development of Stereotypes concerning the Negro," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 38 (1943), 525-531.



will acquire the same attitude and will experience a feeling of hostility toward them.<sup>25</sup>

*The role of the family in attitude formation.* One aspect of the adoption of attitudes from others looms very large in the research data on attitudes, namely, the place of the family in shaping attitudes. It is a sociological and psychological commonplace that parents project on their children their own interests, preferences, prejudices, ambitions, and the like. The child identifies himself rather closely with his parents and looks upon them as models long before he identifies himself with people outside the family. His area of psychological participation is highly constricted so that he is much slower in learning to play the roles of others beyond the family matrix. In this period he readily accepts the standards of value and behavior which dominate the life of his home, and his powers of discrimination and critical judgment have little opportunity to develop. He is normally conditioned by a single set of ideas and attitudes or a narrow frame of attitudinal reference.

The family, like the larger community but anteceding it, defines for the child the expected roles which he must play in various situations. In this "definition of the situation," as Thomas calls it, the child's attitudes are formed.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the whole "life-policy" and the personality of the individual are significantly conditioned by the definitions within the family. Thomas makes this clear when he writes:

Preliminary to any self-determined act of behavior there is always a state of examination and deliberation which we may call the *definition of the situation*. . . .

The child is always born into a group of people among whom all the general types of situation which may arise have already been defined and corresponding rules of conduct developed, and where he has not the slightest chance of making his definitions and following his wishes without interference.<sup>27</sup>

Psychoanalysts, and writers influenced by psychoanalytical concepts and principles, have argued for a long time that family interactions are some of the earliest and most potent influences on attitudes and behavior. They

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<sup>25</sup> E. L. Horowitz, "The Development of Attitude toward the Negro," *Arch. Psychol.*, 1936, No. 194. See also L. W. Kay, "Social Norms as Determinants in the Interpretation of Personal Experiences," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 19 (1944), 359-367.

<sup>26</sup> See W. I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1923), pp. 42-69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. Reprinted by permission of the Social Science Research Council, New York, New York.



believe, for instance, that many people with radical political beliefs express in their behavior an attitude of hostility toward family authority, especially the authority of the father, or an attitude of resentment against parental rejection. An early study by Lasswell arrived at this conclusion. His analysis of radical political leaders led him to conclude that most of them are rebellious because of parental rejection.<sup>28</sup> In other cases Lasswell found that ascendant and aggressive attitudes were products of sibling rivalry, especially with the favored child of the family.

Even more striking is the psychoanalytical study of family authority by Fromm. While Fromm makes no quantitative analysis of radical attitudes which result from family interactions, his hypothesis is, nevertheless, very plausible. Like Lasswell, Fromm argues that many radical political leaders express in their behavior attitudes of resentment toward family authority.<sup>29</sup>

More reliable studies of this problem have been made by other investigators. In a statistical study by Krout and Stagner, and in a later investigation by the latter, the psychoanalytical hypothesis given above is supported. These investigators show that many radicals have unconscious radical attitudes as a consequence of parental attitudes of hostility and rejection.<sup>30</sup>

Newcomb and Svehla made an interesting correlation study which adds further confirmation to the assertion that parents' attitudes affect the attitudes of children. They correlated the attitudes of parents and children toward war, communism, and the church. Their study disclosed, on the whole, a fairly reliable correlation between parents and children on important issues. Specifically, the correlation scores were as follows: war, +.44, communism, +.56, and the church, +.63.<sup>31</sup>

In view of the changing family mores and the rapid changes in the larger society, it is reasonable to suppose that correlations between parents' and children's attitudes will also change. Divergences in the attitudes of these two groups have been noted by most students of the American family. These differences are products of the growing divergence between the

<sup>28</sup> H. D. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930). See also by same author: *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935).

<sup>29</sup> E. Fromm, *Studien Über Autorität und Familie* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1936), ed. by M. Horkheimer.

<sup>30</sup> M. H. Krout and R. Stagner, "Personality Development in Radicals: A Comparative Study," *Sociometry*, 2 (1939), 31-46; R. Stagner, "Studies of Aggressive Social Attitudes. III. Role of Personal and Family Scores," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 20 (1944), 129-140.

<sup>31</sup> T. M. Newcomb and G. Svehla, "Intra-family Relationships in Attitude," *Sociometry*, 1 (1937), 180-205.



norms of the family and those of the community. As Burgess and other students of the family have pointed out, the child is often torn between loyalty to family practices and the desire to follow emerging new standards in the world outside. Not infrequently this clash of attitudes results in disturbance of parent-child relationships and in maladjustment of the child.<sup>32</sup>

**Changing of Attitudes.** Since attitudes are usually defined as more or less enduring states of readiness to respond to objects or situations, it might be inferred that they are wholly static modes of adjustment. Attitudes are by no means fixed and unchanging predispositions. Their full complexity and their role in behavior are better understood if we examine them in their dynamic context. It is a mistake to think of them in static terms, as factors making for rigidity and sameness of behavior. Attitudes *do* change under normal conditions, and in controlled situations the changes may be striking.

In a well-known experiment conducted by Peterson and Thurstone on the effects of motion pictures on the attitudes of children, important changes were noted. After the experimenters measured the children's attitudes toward the Negro, the children were shown the well-known moving picture *The Birth of a Nation*. After the children had seen the movie, the investigators measured their attitudes again. The results showed two things: there was a statistically significant change of attitude favorable toward the Negro, and the attitude persisted for several months, when another measurement was made. The investigators were also able to develop attitudes of acceptance of other races or nationalities, pacifist attitudes, and a more lenient attitude toward crime, by showing children motion pictures selected to bring about changes of attitudes in certain directions.<sup>33</sup> Blumer, in his study of the effects of movies on conduct, got similar results.<sup>34</sup> Britt reports an interesting effect of the movie *It Happened One Night*. In this movie Clark Gable, after removing his shirt, was found to be without an undershirt. "The sale of athletic shirts dropped off to such an extent that certain manufacturers went to the motion picture producers and demanded that the scene be deleted."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> E. W. Burgess and H. J. Locke, *The Family: From Institution to Companionship* (New York: American Book, 1945), chap. ix.

<sup>33</sup> R. C. Peterson and L. L. Thurstone, *Motion Pictures and the Social Attitudes of Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).

<sup>34</sup> H. Blumer, *Movies and Conduct* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).

<sup>35</sup> S. H. Britt, *Social Psychology of Modern Life*, rev. ed. (New York: Rinehart, 1949), p. 260.



The effect of the attitudes and expectancies of others in the community is pretty well recognized. Newcomb's study of attitude change in Bennington students is one of the most interesting. In the Bennington community "liberal" attitudes had a much higher prestige value than "conservative" attitudes. Throughout their four years of residence on the Bennington campus, the girls were given comprehensive tests on social attitudes. Newcomb found that the attitudes of most of them, irrespective of the courses that they studied, tended to shift toward the expected and dominant liberal attitudes which prevailed in the college community.<sup>36</sup>

In a study of the effect on students of motion pictures with a strong propaganda favoring the Soviet Union, Rosenthal found that the attitudes of students shifted to a position more favorable to the Soviet socioeconomic system. What is particularly significant in Rosenthal's results is that only those attitudes changed which were specifically portrayed in the picture.<sup>37</sup>

Another interesting study of attitude change is that of Mapheus Smith. Smith tested the effects of a course on "Immigration and Race Problems" on students' attitudes toward Negroes. The experimental group—the group which was given scientific information on the problem of race—showed a significant change to favorable attitudes toward Negroes. The control group, which was exposed very little to discussions of race problems (only 6 per cent of the time of the course) in an introductory course, showed no change of attitude toward Negroes.<sup>38</sup>

There is by no means a consistent and uniform change in attitudes reported by all experimental efforts to modify attitudes. In some studies no changes or only insignificant changes were reported. In an investigation by Droba on change of attitude toward the Negro, no significant changes were discovered. Droba's experiment, like that of Mapheus Smith, was performed in order to find out whether exposing students to scientific, i.e., affectively neutral, ideas and facts about the American Negro would change the former's attitude toward the latter. Students who had a course on the Negro did not appreciably change their attitude toward him as a consequence of their increased knowledge of the physical, psychological, and social characteristics of the Negro.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> T. M. Newcomb, *Personality and Social Change* (New York: Dryden, 1943).

<sup>37</sup> S. P. Rosenthal, "Change of Socio-economic Attitudes under Radical Motion Picture Propaganda," *Arch. Psychol.*, 1934, No. 166.

<sup>38</sup> M. Smith, "A Study of Change of Attitude toward the Negro," *J. Negro Educ.*, 8 (1939), 64-70.

<sup>39</sup> D. D. Droba, "Education and Negro Attitudes," *Sociol. and Soc. Res.*, 17 (1932), 137-141.



Several years before the time of Droba's experiment, Young performed the same type of experiment. In fact Young's is one of the earliest experiments of this type, and no doubt suggested the technique to later investigators. Young had students rank their attitudes toward various minority groups before and after the students had taken a course in race relations. It was found that only an insignificant change took place in students' attitudes as a result of their contact with reliable knowledge and liberal attitudes toward various races.<sup>40</sup>

Apparently the greatest amount of change produced by formal classroom instruction is not toward the particular race discussed but in the rank position of that race among others. Thus, instruction may not change students' attitudes toward the Negro as a race but will cause them to shift their preference for him in comparison to other races.<sup>41</sup>

It is difficult to evaluate satisfactorily the numerous studies dealing with attitude change.<sup>42</sup> There are inconsistencies and contradictions in results in various investigations. Nevertheless, while attitudes tend on the whole to be persistent, such factors as social expectancies, propaganda, education, and personal experience with different attitudes do make for modifications and shifts in peoples' predispositions toward objects, persons, ideas, and situations in their environment. The chief defect with efforts to change attitudes has been their atomistic and segmental quality. All significant researches during the past twenty years point to the need for a holistic approach to the task; i.e., changing attitudes not in piecemeal fashion but by proper manipulations of the entire culture. Piecemeal efforts can and will produce changes, but the persistence of changed attitudes is highly problematical. If more or less permanent changes are to be effected, changes in the culture are a prime requisite.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> D. Young, "Some Effects of a Course in American Race Problems on the Race Prejudice of 450 Undergraduates at the University of Pennsylvania," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 22 (1927), 235-242.

<sup>41</sup> G. Murphy, L. B. Murphy, and T. M. Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1937), p. 952.

<sup>42</sup> The student who wishes to pursue this subject further, especially as it applies to attitudes in the sphere of race relations in particular, will find the following source full of valuable references: A. M. Rose, *Studies in Reduction of Prejudice* (Chicago: American Council on Race Relations, 1947).

<sup>43</sup> See K. Lewin and P. Grabbe, "Conduct, Knowledge and Acceptance of New Values," *J. Soc. Issues*, 1 (1945), 53-64. For the study of concrete and effective techniques for changing attitudes and behavior, the student should consult recent researches in group dynamics. See, for example, A. J. Marrow, *Living without Hate* (New York: Harper, 1951).



## Attitudes and Frames of Reference

We have pointed out, and supported our assertions with evidence from published research, that attitudes are acquired and undergo change with experience in a sociocultural milieu. This way of stating the matter, while essentially correct, is vague and misleading. A person does not experience the whole of his culture and is not influenced by it as by something "out there" in the form of a total object. Culture in the final analysis is always interiorized in a specific manner by a particular individual in a particular group. An individual sees the world through a pattern of functionally related perceptions which encompass past and present experiences; he responds to new stimuli or situations in terms of these psychological frames of reference. Whether an object is to be described as large or small will depend on other objects with which we compare them. This has been a fundamental principle of Gestalt psychology from its beginnings and its validity has been amply demonstrated. It means simply that of the many social objects which make up our daily experiences we select some and are indifferent to others. A frame of reference by means of which we select the objects of our experience may range from simple perceptions to highly complex social norms or schemes of value. Outside this referential frame objects of experience are "meaningless"; i.e., they have no "anchorage point," as Sherif and Cantril frequently put it (Koffka's *Verankerungspunkt*).

A frame of reference, then, is a "technique" or "scale" for evaluating the social environment and one's place in it. Our experiences consist of objects in relation rather than of separate entities. They derive their significance from other objects to which they are related. Moreover, we rarely, as was said before, incorporate the whole of our society or culture in our attitudes and behavior; rather we participate in, or interact with members of, smaller groups. It is from these smaller groups that most of our effective attitudes spring. This is important to bear in mind, for much mischief can result from the unqualified use of the term *culture* in describing man's behavior. The early work of such sociologists as Thrasher, Zorbaugh, and Shaw, and the more recent study of Whyte, serve as a needed corrective of the vagueness which characterizes the careless use of the concept of cultural conditioning.<sup>44</sup> These writers have shown concretely, even dramatically, the

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<sup>44</sup> See F. M. Thrasher, *The Gang* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927); H. W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929); C. R. Shaw, ed. *Brothers in Crime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); W. F. Whyte, *Street Corner Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943).



influence of the group, or smaller segment of society, and its mores upon the attitudes and behavior of individuals.

**Reference Groups.** Sherif and Cantril employ the term *reference group* to indicate the source of attitudes and their change. The various studies which we have described in this chapter without exception bear out the claim that attitudes are anchored in a group matrix. They are acquired and they change within the family, school, church, political party, or the community as a whole. We become self-involved in these groups so that we identify ourselves with its members and develop loyalties to its ideals. The attitudes of others are *our* attitudes and we defend them with great tenacity. The persistence of attitudes, and the lengths to which men go to preserve them, can be explained only on the basis of their strong anchorage in reference groups. The nature of our relations to others and the values which sustain our loyalties to them are conditioned by our membership in reference groups. The reference group which so effectively shapes man's attitudes and behavior is in turn a part of the larger frame of reference which includes other reference groups. When the norms of these reference groups diverge or conflict, the individual strives to reconcile them by various means, such as deception, rationalization, and being everything to everyone.

Sherif and Cantril describe the referential nature of attitudes as follows:

Major attitudes are . . . derived from groups to which we learn to relate ourselves or which we regard ourselves as members of: reference groups, membership groups. *My* identification and allegiances, *my* status and position are determined with respect to these reference and membership groups. If I can relate myself securely to these reference groups, *I* feel secure in my general status, insofar as the values of the reference groups themselves are compatible. If I can anchor myself securely in a membership group, *I* feel secure in my more specific membership position.<sup>45</sup>

**The Role of Values.** In our discussion of the nature of attitudes we called attention to the fact that all attitudes are directional, that they are responses to objects in the environment. An attitude is a state of somebody toward something. This "something" toward which an attitude is directed is a *value*. The term value has been largely a philosophical concept having a multiplicity of meanings. A social value, according to the pioneers Thomas and Znaniecki, is "any datum having an empirical content accessible to the members of some social group and a meaning

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<sup>45</sup> Reprinted by permission from *The Psychology of Ego-Involvements*, by M. Sherif and H. Cantril, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1947, p. 114.



with regard to which it is or may be an object of activity.”<sup>46</sup> Thus a food-stuff, a university, and a poem are instances of social values. They are objective, for they exist “outside” of the individual and yet are objects toward which he may react. Accordingly, they also have roots in the individual. They are products of the interests and activities of men in groups. When a natural object *acquires a meaning* it becomes a value. An object without meaning, in other words, has no value: it is a “bare” entity. Attitudes and values are correlative; one does not exist without the other. This is consistent with our earlier statement that attitudes always involve the relation of the individual to specific situations in his environment. Also, it implies that not all values need to be social—i.e., common to a group. Whatever object a person becomes affectively involved with, though it may have value to no one else, is a value to *him*. Thus a toy as a memento of a departed child is a value to the bereaved mother, and the pressed rose-petal given him by his bride is a value to the aging husband. Thus conceived, the distinction between individual and social values and attitudes is largely superficial. It is conceivable that *all* attitudes and values are social; for even the foregoing examples are in part socially conditioned. One retains a fixation on a memento or a rose-petal because these are largely learned forms of behavior; they are forms of sentiment which are valued in some groups. Since social values are temporally antecedent to individual interiorizations of them, all values are, of course, social. Our purpose here, however, is only to make clear that the distinction between individual and social is largely unnecessary. Values are important for social psychology because they *are* antecedent to the individual’s incorporation of them into his own reaction-system, for in this way they influence his behavior in significant ways.

The important consideration regarding the relation between attitudes and values is that attitudes are as numerous and heterogeneous as the situations which give rise to them. Certainly the enormous body of evidence amassed by field ethnologists and the many recent studies of reference groups and communities by sociologists bear powerful witness to the large variety of values and their diversity of influences on human attitudes and behavior. The conflicting loyalties and divergent ideologies which beset modern man bear tragic testimony to the role of values in the formation of attitudes. So omnipresent are these values that even those areas of human activity, like science and scholarship, which pride themselves on

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<sup>46</sup> W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Boston: Badger, 1918–1920), Vol. I, p. 21.



being free of *Wertbeziehung*, or value-relationship, are now recognized to be effectively value-bound.<sup>47</sup> The dominant values of the scientific world as well as those of the larger society influence the attitudes and beliefs of those who work in it. The world of social values conditions the scientist's productions, the direction of his interests; and the choice of his techniques. There is evidence showing that the social origins and social experiences—the reference groups and membership groups—of individual scientists which condition their attitudes are reflected in their scientific achievements. Karl Marx, for example, a contemporary of Charles Darwin and subject to the same intellectual and scientific climate but possessed of a mind conditioned by a different social environment, produced a radically different system of thought. Darwin reflected the individualistic and competitive philosophy of middle-class Englishmen, whereas Marx gives evidence in his social philosophy of rebellion against authority and the dis-esteem in which his "race" was held by the dominant elements in the German community. The ethos of an epoch and the reference groups to which men are bound affect their attitudes in ways not yet altogether clear.

Thus, when we speak of individual values we do not distinguish them essentially from social values. They are individual in the sense that the self is more intensely involved in them. They are self-interest-bound. We mean nothing ethical by this statement; the self-interest-bound individual is not "selfish" or "egoistic"; he is only more deeply involved as an individual in some values than in others. They mean more to *him* because his self is deeply and affectively tied up with them. Thus the radical pacifist who prefers internment to military service is more affectively involved in the cause of peace than another peace-loving individual who participates in limited military service. Pacifism has a different meaning to each.

The tenacity of many attitudes—this is particularly true of race prejudice—is due to the pressure of the value-system upon members of a group. Social pressure is but another way of describing the fact that attitudes are socially "contagious." They are widely shared by members of a group because attitudes and values are both anchored in a frame of reference. Accordingly our attitudes, again more particularly our prejudices, are acquired not so much in our interactions with persons as in our interactions with the attitudes of reference groups or communities. This fact helps to explain the puzzling situation of the individual who, although he has never

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<sup>47</sup> See for example, R. Müller-Freienfels, "Studies in the Social Psychology of Science," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 4 (1933), 26-41; E. Schrödinger, *Science and the Human Temperament* (New York: Norton, 1935).



had any contact with Negroes, is nevertheless antipathetic toward them. He is reacting primarily not to Negroes as individuals or as groups, but toward the existing attitude of his reference group, or his whole society, toward Negroes.<sup>48</sup> Frames of reference, or social norms, rather than specific personal experience, are at the basis of many attitudes of this type. These frames of reference are interiorized by the individual and made his own. It is this self-involvement, especially when it is affectively intense besides, which causes certain types of prejudice to be so irrational and invulnerable to logical attack. We love and hate, we accept and reject, in accordance with the prevailing norms of the group.

Many investigations stemming from Sherif's original experiment on autokinesis have demonstrated the validity of the foregoing observations. In his well-known experiment Sherif prepared an "unstructured" situation, i.e., a situation in which the subjects had no frame of reference in which to anchor their observations. The subjects were then asked to indicate the movement of a spot of light in a dark room. There were no other objects which the subjects could use for comparing their perceptions. Although the spot of light was fixed, it was reported as being in motion by the various subjects. At one stage of the experiment Sherif himself took part and reported his own observations. At another time a second subject, and finally a large group of subjects, were asked to indicate the nature and extent of the movements which they perceived during the experiment. There was a definite and measurable effect of the presence of others upon what each individual perceived, and the perceptions were further influenced by the prestige of certain subjects in the experiment. The experiment indicated unequivocally that the frame of reference or judgment of one subject was markedly affected by the frames of reference of other subjects.<sup>49</sup> Like the individual who is prejudiced against Negroes because Negro prejudice is a norm in his group, so these subjects were influenced in what they perceived by the perception of others in the experimental situation.<sup>50</sup> In short, attitudes are formed by the dominant values or social norms which prevail in a group.

The Place of Role-perception in Attitudes. The experiments by

<sup>48</sup> E. L. Horowitz, *op. cit.*

<sup>49</sup> M. Sherif, "A Study of Some Social Factors in Perception," *Arch. Psychol.*, 1935, No. 187; *The Psychology of Social Norms* (New York: Harper, 1936); and "An Experimental Approach to the Study of Attitudes," *Sociometry*, 1 (1937), 90-98.

<sup>50</sup> Sherif's experiments, and all work on attitudes which places them in a specific frame of reference, are nice confirmations of the Gestalt theory of perception. See W. Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Liveright, 1929), chaps. v, ix.



Sherif and the empirical research of other investigators point to the essential validity of Mead's analysis of behavior in terms of role-acting. We have shown in our discussions of language, the socialization of the individual, and the self and its involvements that the human individual as a psychological being develops in interaction with others in a group. His self develops in the process of his becoming an object to himself, of taking the role of the other, of taking his own point of view and the points of view of others. The young child's capacity in this regard is of course very limited, but his growth into maturity is to a great extent the development of this capacity. An important period in this development of the ability to take up in himself the attitudes of another is when he begins to play in accordance with the "rules of the game." Mead states the matter as follows:

Children take a great interest in rules. They make rules on the spot in order to help themselves out of difficulties. Part of the enjoyment of the game is to get these rules. Now, the rules are the set of responses which a particular attitude calls out. You can demand a certain response in others if you take a certain attitude. These responses are all in yourself as well. There you get an organized set of such responses as that to which I have referred, which is something more elaborate than the roles found in play. Here there is just a set of responses that follow on each other indefinitely. At such a stage we speak of a child as not yet having a fully developed self. The child responds in a fairly intelligent fashion to the immediate stimuli that come to him, but they are not organized. He does not organize his life as we would like to have him do, namely, as a whole. . . . In his game he has to have an organization of these roles; otherwise he cannot play the game. The game represents the passage in the life of the child from taking the role of others in play to the organized part that is essential to self-consciousness in the full sense of the term.<sup>51</sup>

This organization of roles, the student will recall, is the generalized other, a form of behavior in which the individual takes the attitudes of others, or of the group, and makes them his own. His own attitudes are derived from the attitudes of others; and without these attitudes of the other he has none himself. In the language of frames of reference, an individual has attitudes only because members of his reference group have attitudes. Outside a reference group his acts are "meaningless," that is, they cannot be anchored, because there are no norms by which to judge their relevance.

The generalized other is the set of values or social norms by which the act of an individual becomes intelligible to himself and to others. It is the

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<sup>51</sup> G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 152. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



frame of reference by which the norms or attitudes of the group become his own norms or attitudes, by which an individual locates himself in a world of various and divergent social expectancies.

In his well-known researches with children, Piaget arrived at the same conclusion. Piaget, like Mead, observed and was impressed by the rule-consciousness of growing children. Like the generalized other (the "voice of the community") of Mead, the system of rules, Piaget found, make up the morality of the growing child. Just as in Mead's analysis of play, where there is yet little grasp by the child of the controlling value of rules, so in Piaget's analysis of a child's marble playing, there is but a dim awareness of the meaning of the rules of the game. To the child of five or six the rules are imposed from without; they are not yet his own rules. In the same manner Mead observed that the young child makes rules on the spot, even if in so doing he breaks other rules, to help himself get out of difficulties.

Cooperative activities in which the child is able to take the attitude of another seldom develop before the seventh or eighth year, according to Piaget. This is the age also, as we pointed out in our chapter on language, when the child's language habits have developed to the level where he uses words from the point of view of the person addressed, instead of largely from his own point of view. The child, in other words, now acts more and more in terms of the norms or values of his referential groups—his playmates, his family, his community. Instead of being wholly constraints imposed from without, the rules become more self-imposed, and the individual acts more and more in accordance with the norms of his group. As we said on another occasion, society's will becomes progressively the individual's will.<sup>52</sup> The attitudes of others are interiorized in such a way as to become his own attitudes. The norms of the group become his own norms, and he judges his own behavior upon the background of the frame of reference of the society in which he lives. As the frames of reference differ, so do the attitudes which are anchored in them differ. There are no universal and invariable attitudes; they are as numerous and varied as the frames of reference or social norms that give rise to them. This is, then, but one more confirmation of the basic theme of this book: personality and the whole complex of motives, traits, attitudes, and the like, which make up the person in society are products of sociocultural influences within specific, and on the whole circumscribed, reference groups.

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<sup>52</sup> Besides Mead's work see J. Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child*, trans. by M. Warden (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926) and *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932).



Frames of reference, then, are the sets of values or social norms which give meaning to an attitude. An attitude is the "subjective" tendency to respond to an object. When the object becomes the goal of an attitude, it becomes a value. The meaning of the object varies with the individual's experiences and self-involvements: "Caviar is not a delicacy to the general." An attitude is the "subjective" counterpart of an objective value; it is what the person of a given group tends to do with reference to the given social norms. What makes the norm or value social is the fact that it is an object, condition, or state of affairs which has roughly the same meaning to every member of the group. It is this *common meaning* which makes a value truly social.

### The Measurement of Attitudes

Of the measurement of attitudes there is no end. While this concern with measurement is an encouraging development, there is danger of its becoming an end in itself. The scientific function of measurement is to increase man's understanding and control of the objects of his research, not an exclusive concern with method and technique in themselves. The problem of measurement in social psychology is further complicated by the fact that there often is no real certainty regarding that which we purport to be measuring. This is notoriously true in the field of attitude measurement. If an attitude is a *tendency* to act, a *predisposition* to respond positively or negatively to an object, a more or less enduring *state of readiness* to respond in a certain way, can it be measured? If we measure an individual's *verbal statement* of what he thinks about an issue, are we measuring his attitude?

Earlier in this chapter we called attention to the ideal condition in which the act (i.e., behavior) is what the attitude means, and the attitude means what the act does. In this ideal situation there is a complete correspondence between the attitude and the behavior of a person with reference to an object. In too many circumstances this one-to-one relationship does not obtain. If, therefore, we measure the individual's behavior we cannot be certain that we are also measuring his attitude—how he *really* thinks or feels about the object, person, or situation toward which his measured behavior is supposed to be his reaction. If we measure his verbal responses to questions concerning race or politics, say, we cannot be sure that his actual behavior will conform with his expressed attitudes. Man *says* one thing but *does* another. Thus, an opinion expressed on a questionnaire may be no more than an acceptable rationalization of an attitude—an answer given in justification of an attitude. There is truth in Wirth's dictum that an



opinion is something that we express, whereas an attitude is something which we betray.<sup>53</sup> It is a known fact that people are reluctant or afraid to express their true covert beliefs or attitudes on certain issues because of social disapproval. Anonymous and signed questionnaires yield different answers to the same questions.<sup>54</sup>

A distinction can be made also between what may be called "official" and "private" attitudes. Politicians frequently express one set of attitudes "for the record" and another set as "private citizens." In an interesting study by Schanck some years ago a similar distinction was found among church-goers regarding their attitudes toward the correct form of baptism. The subjects were members of the Methodist and of the Baptist churches. Sprinkling is the approved method in the Methodist Church, whereas total immersion is the prescribed method in the Baptist Church. When their attitudes as church members were sought, they reflected the official view, each according to the doctrine of his respective church. When their private opinions were tested, there was no significant correlation with the practices of their respective churches. As a matter of fact, the disparity between the official and private attitudes was rather striking.<sup>55</sup>

Again, responses to items on questionnaires are affected by the manner in which they are phrased. Ambiguity and suggestion or "loading" may affect the responses in a variety of ways. Too many measurements of attitudes fail to take account of their referential nature; that is, that attitudes are always anchored to frames of reference, to referential groups within society. Class membership, for example, can in very subtle ways influence the respondents and color the interpretations of interviewers themselves. Subjects often are curious regarding the intent or purpose of a questionnaire or an experiment and their interpretations of items may be affected by that fact. In view of these difficulties and more besides, it is no idle question to ask: Can attitudes be measured?

We have noted that attitudes are essentially covert tendencies. If we are to measure them, they must somehow be drawn out into or manifest themselves in the form of overt behavior. This can be done in two ways. We can, first, measure the *verbal* report of the attitude. This is the most common procedure, used largely because a sizable bulk of human attitudes are

<sup>53</sup> L. Wirth, in a private discussion. This gifted social scientist died May 3, 1952.

<sup>54</sup> W. Turnbull, "Secret vs. Non-secret Ballots," in H. Cantril, ed., *Gauging Public Opinion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), chap. v.

<sup>55</sup> R. L. Schanck. "A Study of the Community and its Groups and Institutions Conceived of as Behaviors of Individuals," *Psychol. Monogr.*, 43 (1932), No. 195.



predispositions toward or away from verbal responses. So much is this true that some writers are inclined to limit their definitions of attitude, for mensurative purposes, to those that are verbally expressed.<sup>56</sup>

A second way of approaching attitude measurement is by the use of interpretive methods. This is not a happy term, since all attitudes are in a way measured indirectly, they being only *tendencies* to act, not actions themselves. These techniques are designed to lead the subject to *betray* his attitudes, to express them without his being aware of the investigator's design or purpose. The projective methods which we discussed in Chapter 2 are good examples of this type of attitude measurement, even though the projective tests are primarily designed to measure the personality as a whole. The student should turn to Chapter 2 for a review of attitude measurement.

### Attitudes and the Self

We shall now give some attention to the relation between attitudes and the self. The self is really an organization of attitudes, and the integration of the self is dependent upon the consistency of an individual's attitudes.

**Attitudes and the Integration of the Self.** The self, we have said in diverse ways, is the integrated roles which an individual acts in his group. The integrated roles constitute the general role, or generalized other, which we call the organized self. The generalized other is a *general attitude* which grows out of the individual's interactions with others and with the customs and expectancies of the group. Unlike the child, who acts specified roles, the mature self is able to take very general roles. He is a generalized self. All the evidence from the researches which we have reviewed in this chapter—and more besides—demonstrate that the development of the self is the development of attitudes. The self is the reference point of all attitudes, and insofar as they are deeply anchored in the self they make for its integration. The self is, then, an organization of attitudes. Since most adult attitudes are not isolated formations, they provide the coherent elements which make up the integrated self.

Again, since attitudes are more or less enduring predispositions to respond in certain ways to specific situations, they make for continuity and persistence of the individual and thereby safeguard his identity through time.

<sup>56</sup> See for example, P. T. Young, *Motivation of Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1936), p. 242. Young does not, however, deny the existence of nonverbal attitudes.



The "sense of self," although it is always undergoing modifications with changes in the external social environment, maintains a continuity and identity through the involvements of the self in more or less abiding attitudes. When the attitudes in which the self is involved change too rapidly or too suddenly, as in the case of extreme crises, or when the frames of reference to which they are anchored collapse, as when the liberal-minded Jew found himself confronted by a barbarous Nazi tyranny, the self too may become disorganized. The integration of the self is thus dependent upon the consistency of a person's attitudes and the relative stability of the norms of his group.

**Attitudes, Values, and the Self.** We have pointed out that attitudes are always directed toward values—objects, persons, situations, etc., with which the individual self becomes involved. But the individual self becomes involved in them—that is, they are values to *him*—because they are the values or expectancies of the group of which he is a part. The chief components of his attitudes will thus vary with the values to which he feels loyal, and these in turn will vary with the situations or groups in which the values are firmly rooted. Attitudes will vary with the values, groups, and cultures in which a person has his being. The ethnological data which we have presented in this and the preceding chapters give adequate testimony to this conclusion.

As one breaks down the total social system and looks minutely at its numerous reference groups, the foregoing observation becomes more sharply focused. It is not too difficult a task to live in accordance with the over-all norms of one's entire society. Thus most Americans have an attitude of loyalty to what is vaguely called "democracy." There is here only one general loyalty or identification, loyalty to one's country. But a society is a congeries of reference groups, demanding different and often conflicting loyalties. The task of adjustment becomes, accordingly, increasingly difficult. Conflicts of norms cause confusions of loyalties, and these confusions lead to confusions and contradictions in human behavior. The cultural hybrid is a good illustration of this confusion, but he is by no means the greatest victim of divergent social values.

When finally we break the process down still farther, we come to those individuals, relatively small in number, whose attitudes are not to any great extent formed by the norms of the group. They follow, instead, a frame of values which, while incorporating group norms, is largely an outgrowth of their individual experience, learning, and thinking. In this category must be placed all those attitudes and values which we ascribe to many rebels, radicals, artists, and scientists—men who, more than any others, create their own values and live in accordance with their own attitudes.



## Conclusion

In this chapter we have brought together some of the most relevant, and on the whole most adequate, theoretical and empirical researches on the nature and functions of attitudes in human behavior. While the work in this field, as in most areas of social psychology, shows considerable divergence of ideas and opinions, there is nevertheless a core of agreement which shows that attitudes are more or less enduring predispositions to action toward determinate objects or values. These predispositions are acquired modes of response to a stimulus-situation.

We cannot agree with the claim that the concept of attitude is the central concept of social psychology, and we reject as completely unwarranted the attempt to equate the study of attitudes with social psychology. We believe rather that the central concept of social psychology is *personality* and that all attitudes are predispositions of the *self*. In our discussions of the self and its involvements it was shown that the responses that we make toward others serve as stimuli to which they in turn respond to us. Many of these responses are attitudes, and these attitudes affect our own attitudes and behavior. As social beings we continually strive to build up in others favorable attitudes toward ourselves and to have those attitudes become permanent modes of response to ourselves. In this manner we come to be controlled in our behavior by the way we think others expect us to behave. Attitudes thus serve as powerful agencies for individual and social control. We are conscious of what others think of us, so that our attitudes toward ourselves are to a great extent our consciousness of the attitudes which we think that others have toward us. Thus, viewed from Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self," my idea of myself is largely what I think my neighbor's idea is of myself. I tend to continue to behave as people have learned to expect me to behave. In this way I preserve my status with my group. This fact accounts for the need to keep up one's reputation and throws important light on the breakdown of the self. Disorganization or breakdown of the self is not infrequently a consequence of the changed or injured status of the individual. Thus the unemployed father comes to feel with overwhelming force his failure, because not infrequently he is despised by his whole family and eventually by himself.<sup>57</sup> This is but another demonstration of the claim that the intensity of an attitude is determined by the degree in which the self is involved in an object or value.

The measurement of attitudes, which consumes the energies of many social psychologists, is a laudable enterprise, but it has its pitfalls and dangers. Enthusiasts are likely to claim more precision for their measurements than the char-

<sup>57</sup> This has been demonstrated by several studies of the effect of the depression upon the family. See R. C. Angell, *The Family Encounters the Depression* (New York: Scribner, 1936); M. Komarovsky, *The Unemployed Man and His Family* (New York: Dryden, 1940).



acter of attitudes permits. They commit the error of putting too much faith in their segmental observations, and of describing the very essence of attitudes when they have observed it in only a single setting. Attitudes, like all things human, are highly complex. They cannot be separated, like the sheep from the goats, into simple components, for they are above all else organized responses. Fragmentation of attitudes into measurable units is as false and sterile as the division into components of the total personality. If social psychology is to discharge its moral obligation to be scientific, it dare not confuse the segments of behavior with the total person. When the measurer of attitudes is fully aware of the limitations of his instruments and knows that his conclusions are only partial insights, his work takes on a value of no mean significance.



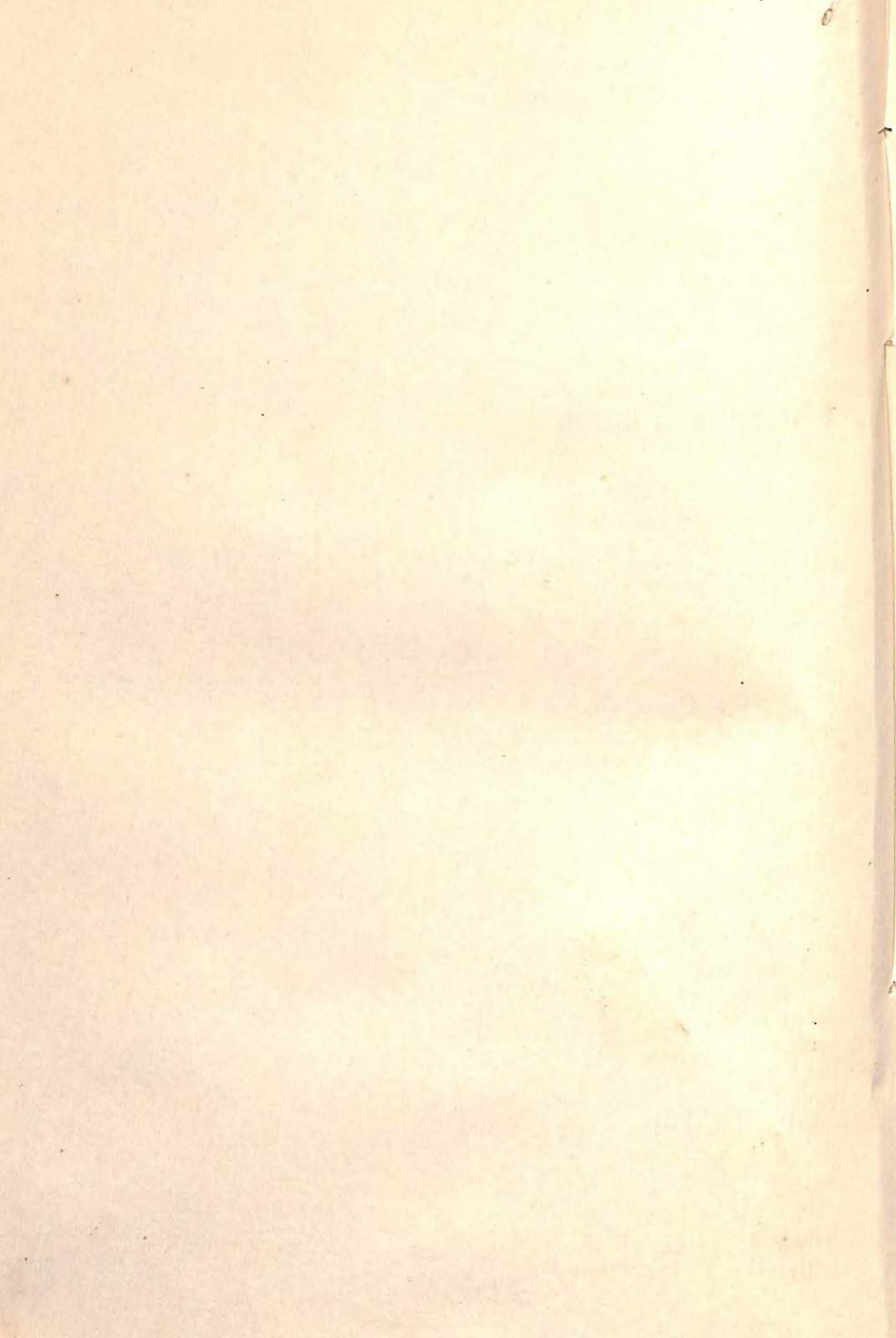


PART THREE:

# Culture and Behavior

CULTURAL VALUES AND  
PERSONAL-SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT







## CHAPTER 8 :

# Integrative Systems and Human Adjustment

IN THE PRECEDING division of this book we concentrated largely on society or the group, particularly on the underlying processes of interaction and their role in personality formation. In the present division, or Part III, we shall consider the effect of culture on the personality. Until fairly recently, an artificial distinction has been made between cultural phenomena and individual behavior. Even sociologists, who have generally been keenly perceptive of the role of customs and institutions in shaping human attitudes and behavior, have not always formulated their social psychology on the basis of ethnological data, but have been satisfied with explaining behavior in terms of social processes.

Fortunately for all the disciplines involved in the study of human behavior, a *rapprochement* is today taking place. Personality is now increasingly studied in its relation to bio-socio-cultural learning within a given



social milieu. Freud helped to stimulate this relationship, for he was among the first to use the method of interdisciplinary study of personality. The cultural anthropologists, too, did a great deal to bring about this *rapprochement*. Although Rivers was one of the early workers in this area, the most consistent and persevering labors to this end were those of Sapir.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his lifetime he stressed the need for ethnology and psychology (including psychiatry) to work together to create a unified science of human personality—a science in which personality is conceived in the final analysis as the individual's interiorization, or meaning-rendering, of cultural traits and patterns. Mandelbaum describes Sapir's fusion of the two sciences into a science of personality and Sapir's own view of the matter:

He [Sapir] called this a bastard field, disowned by the orthodox families of both anthropology and psychology. His influence has had much to do with the increasing awareness of its legitimacy. If he may not be called the father of this realm of research, he is certainly one godfather who stood sponsor for it and steadfastly worked to make its name respectable and its importance recognized.<sup>2</sup>

## The Problem

While it took social psychologists a long time to arrive at this tridimensional view of personality—personality, that is, as a product of the interplay between the biological individual, the group, and culture—its validity can no longer be questioned. Every organism lives in an environment. The human organism lives in an environment of other human organisms and their standards and values. A human individual is human because of his relatedness to others and to the customs of his group. The organization of a personality reflects in significant ways the organization of a culture.<sup>3</sup>

The study of personality in terms of the organization of culture is, of course, open to difficulties and dangers. If we are all products of the impress of culture, we are also easy victims of the cultural myopia which

<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, "Sociology and Psychology," *Sociol. Rev.*, 9 (1916), 1-13; E. Sapir, "Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 27 (1932), 229-242.

<sup>2</sup> D. G. Mandelbaum, "Social Trends and Personal Pressures: The Growth of a Culture Pattern" in L. Spier, *et al.*, eds., *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir* (Menasha, Wis.: Sapir Memorial Fund, 1941) p. 219. Reprinted by courtesy of Leslie Spier, editor of General Series in Anthropology.

<sup>3</sup> J. W. Woodward, "The Relation of Personality Structure to the Structure of Culture," *Amer. Sociol. Rev.*, 3 (1938), 637-651.



## 8 • Integrative Systems and Human Adjustment

conditions us to see people of other cultures and their behavior in distorted perspective. We unwittingly interpret their behavior in the light of our own customs and norms. For instance, the American social psychologist may conclude that the competitiveness he finds in his own society is a universal trait rather than one inherent in his particular culture. A communist student of human behavior, on the other hand, too easily ascribes to the same behavior the quality of a decadent capitalism. Another difficulty in studying personality in terms of culture is found in the complexity of the latter. Particularly in the Western world, there are sub-cultures and divergent reference groups within the sub-cultures, each having its own set of expectancies, each demanding its own loyalties.

**The Comparative Point of View.** With these precautions in mind, and with other precautions that will arise in the course of our discussion, we shall find that there are central tendencies in the personalities of one culture when compared with those of another. The chief value of the concept of culture to social psychology is that by making central tendencies possible it increases man's capacity for predicting human behavior. If, for example, we know a great deal about the basic disciplines used by a particular group in the socialization of the child, or the dominant fantasy solution that prevails in the group, we can predict with some assurance the basic personalities of its "normal" population. More than that: on the basis of reliable data on the cultural factors operating in a group, we can account for deviant behavior as well. Abnormal behavior, like normal behavior, grows out of the efforts of the individual to interiorize, understand, and adjust to the cultural norms of a group. Just as the cultural milieu channelizes our basic biological urges into approved forms of expression, it can also exaggerate and distort them. To understand either effect of culture, one must understand something of the culture itself.

Ethnologists have known the importance of the concept of culture longer than any other students of human behavior. In his study of the Melanesians of the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski saw the principles of culture conditioning clearly at work. Malinowski has supplied the neo-Freudian psychoanalysts with some of their most crucial data for the study of the neurotic personality. This is especially true regarding the "revisionists'" view of the place of sexual repression in the psychological complexes of man. The allegedly universal Oedipus complex, it was eventually recognized, is only a peculiarity of Western attitudes regarding sexual repression. Where sexual repression prevails between brother and sister instead of between mother and son, and where the resulting hostility is directed, not from



son to father but from son to uncle, as among the Trobriand Islanders, the Oedipus complex as understood in Western society does not exist.<sup>4</sup>

Early social psychologists called attention to the fact that perception and even memory have a social framework apart from which they cannot be adequately understood. More recently Bartlett established the cultural quality of memory experimentally. His experiments leave no doubt in one's mind that the perception and memory of even simple objects are conditioned by the interests and temperament of the subjects who in turn are conditioned by the kinds of discriminations and selections which are dominant in their group.<sup>5</sup>

Ruth Benedict, in her deft combination of the anthropological and psychological points of view, applied her technique to the study of four primitive cultures and was able to show a correlation between type of culture and type of personality within each society. Thus the Plains Indian is a manic type of individual, for his culture stresses the importance of "Dionysian" frenzies and visions. The Zuñi Indian of New Mexico is temperate and modest. He distrusts excesses of any kind, for his culture values self-effacement and scorns violence and power. The Dobuan of Melanesia is highly "paranoid" and hostile, for his culture makes virtues of treachery and ill-will. The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island is a supreme egotist because his society holds great stock by self-glorification and shaming of one's guests.<sup>6</sup>

More recently Benedict was able to make a striking analysis of the relation between the two-fold nature of Japanese culture as symbolized by the chrysanthemum and the sword and the dual personality of the Japanese who can be at once tender and inordinately cruel.<sup>7</sup>

To date we possess reliable knowledge of some sixteen or eighteen cultures, including our own, and their effects on the personalities of its members.<sup>8</sup> We shall describe some of these cultures in Chapter 10, and relate our descriptions to the personality patterns that emerge from their impact on the individual.

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<sup>4</sup> B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927).

<sup>5</sup> F. C. Bartlett, *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

<sup>6</sup> R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), chaps. iv-vi.

<sup>7</sup> R. Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946).

<sup>8</sup> Two interesting analyses of American culture and personality are: M. Mead, *Keep your Powder Dry* (New York: Morrow, 1942), and G. Gorer, *The American People: A Study in National Character* (New York: Norton, 1948).



**Basic Cultural Frames.** We shall now consider the cultural factors that play such an important role in shaping the personality of an individual. These are the *integrative* systems, or systems of orientation, which enable the individual to organize his attitudes and behavior around a few and relatively stable systems of ideas and practices. These systems are found in one form or another, with more or less controlling power over the individual's conduct, in every society.

In order to survive man has at all times found it necessary to devise means of maintaining control over himself and his environment and of giving to life a sense of direction. These means have been of three kinds: the rational systems, the belief systems, and the social ideologies.<sup>9</sup> *The rational systems* are all those methods of control which make up the knowledge, technology, and "science" of a group, such as tools, instruments, the system of skills for manipulating these instruments, and its abstract and symbolic knowledge. The chief function of these systems is to adjust individuals and groups to the natural environment and to transform non-usable or natural forms into usable or social forms. *The belief systems* are all the ideas, invariably absolute, which function to adapt members of a group to those areas of life which cannot be manipulated by the existing technology or skills, namely, the realm of the unknown. The belief systems consist of verbal and conceptual systems—such as religion, folklore, and mythology—and ritualistic systems—such as the dramatic rites of birth, death, and marriage. They express the abiding sentiments and values of a people which bind its members into a unified group. *The social ideologies* are the set of ideas or values which express the power relations among members of a group. They regulate the relations of men to one another and create a certain degree of invariancy. They organize and control the rational systems, or technology, and determine the division of labor of a society and the division of goods among its members. Their fundamental aim is to foster social well-being.

The institutional life of every society is based to some degree on these three integrative systems. No society is dominated by one or the other exclusively, though one may offer greater individual and collective security than the others. It is a matter of great import for sociocultural change and equilibrium, however, whether the institutions of a society are oriented toward one or the other systems. This is seen most concretely and vividly,

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<sup>9</sup> Kardiner designates these systems as follows: empirical, projective, and social ideology. See his *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), chap. iii.



as we shall see, in the difference between primitive and Western societies and personalities.

## The Rational Systems

We have said that the rational systems are all those instruments, ideas, and skills by means of which people in a society control the natural environment in their own interest. There is no society which does not possess a set of ideas to explain the world, and in many societies these ideas are not sharply distinguished from their belief systems. Again, there is no society that has not devised means of exploiting the natural resources of its environment for vouchsafing its own survival. In matters pertaining to his survival, man has always been realistic and hardheaded. His approach to the material aspects of his culture is empirical, objective, and utilitarian.

**Man's Techniques.** Man everywhere acts on the premise and forges his instruments on the assumption that natural phenomena are consequences of connective relationships. Man everywhere is ingenious and inventive and able to profit from the successes and failures in his experience.

We are too highly impressed, as a rule, by modern technology to appreciate, except on rare occasion, the knowledge and skill of primitive man. Herskovits, in describing the technology of simple peoples, highlights their skills and achievements nicely. The skill required in making a boomerang, for example, is appreciable when measured upon the background of their total culture. The suspension bridges of the pygmies of the Congo are marvelous achievements. Unable to swim and having no river craft, they erect a passage across a stream by means of a ropelike vine swung across by one of their members, and reinforced by other cords. Some earlier peoples, such as the Mayans and pre-Spanish Peruvians, achieved a complex scientific development resembling that of "civilized" man. Herskovits cites the precision of the Maya calendar, the architectural skills of the Peruvians, the smallpox vaccination of certain African tribes, and the navigation of the Polynesians, who sailed small craft over great distances and used charts made of rattan which would indicate prevailing winds and currents, and therefore the direction of travel.<sup>10</sup> From his study of the technology and material culture of nonliterate man, Herskovits pictures

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<sup>10</sup> M. J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 246.



... a hard-working individual who effectively calls on the skills which he draws from his enculturative experience, skills that are adequate to gain him the living he desires. Understandably, few members of any group, literate or nonliterate, are creative enough perceptibly to change its way of life. But nonliterate man, like men who live in literate societies, is neither automaton nor infantile. He is practical, seeing an advantage when it is presented to him—provided it not be too far removed from the technological patterns of his culture—and using it if he is convinced that it will accomplish the results that he desires.<sup>11</sup>

This is a quite different picture from that almost universally held of nonliterate peoples by Western man. He thinks of them as thoroughly lazy and irresponsible, working only enough to eke out a bare existence. There is overwhelming evidence that men are almost never fully satisfied with the bounties of their natural environment. The very nature of life in a natural environment presents problems that challenge men's imagination and demand sustained effort and an effective design for living. The tools and materials of a culture do not just happen. Behind them are modes of thinking and plans of action.

**Science and Technology of Modern Man.** Like preliterate man, literate man first relied upon trial and error and fortunate hunches in his control of natural forces. Like preliterate man, he finally adopted for permanent use that method which pragmatically worked best in enabling him to achieve the ends of daily living.

With the coming of the modern era, however, a new mental pattern was introduced into man's attempts to master the forces of nature. This consists of a set of rational principles that explains the methods themselves. These are *scientific* principles in that they provide the rationale, the underlying reasons, for the success of the particular techniques. They are the explanations, furthermore, of the natural phenomena upon which the techniques are exercised. Their value is two-fold: they account for the workings of a particular method; and they forestall the need for wasteful trial and error, for the probable outcome of their application can be predicted in advance.

The rationalization and mechanization of life is the most striking feature of contemporary culture. This is more particularly true of Western civilization, largely because physics and chemistry have been developed more highly in the Western world than anywhere else. The effect of science and technology on the economic life of Western man challenges the imagination. The most obvious and far-reaching consequences are found in the

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.



form of extreme specialization, increased productivity of goods, large-scale economic organization, centralization of authority, tremendous increase in wealth, and concentration of ownership and of power.

**The Rational Systems and Behavior.** Our concern is with the effect of science and technology upon the attitudes and behavior of man. The most interesting and penetrating analysis of the role of the integrative systems in human behavior is that of Abram Kardiner.<sup>12</sup> We shall follow his analyses closely throughout this chapter.

*Western society.* The enormous increase in scientific knowledge initiated by such luminaries as Galileo and Newton, and the extended control of the external world which this knowledge made possible, could hardly have left untouched the personality of Western man. The enormous changes wrought by science and technology not only changed man's conception of the universe and his place in it, but also his conception of himself and therefore of his basic personality. By helping to destroy feudalism and establishing the middle class, as Kardiner points out, it altered the character of Western man.<sup>13</sup> Because the new scientific outlook and the establishment of the middle-class philosophy of economic liberalism successfully challenged and altered man's religious beliefs (the belief systems), he had to depend increasingly upon himself for his salvation, and success, particularly economic success, came to be a sure proof of goodness and virtue.

The impact of the changed view of the universe and the application of technology to the improvement of living conditions has had notable effects upon the personalities of Americans. From Benjamin Franklin to Henry Ford, the attitudes of Americans have been a complete embodiment of the social ethics of capitalism and Protestantism. The maxims exalting industry, frugality, and diligence as a means of acquiring wealth have been preached from the time of Benjamin Franklin to that of our contemporary Roger Babson.<sup>14</sup> The religious roots of modern capitalism have meanwhile been dying, and with their death, as Max Weber pointed out, capitalism must also change.<sup>15</sup> With the change in the means of production have come changes in the outlook, attitude, and behavior of contemporary man. This

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<sup>12</sup> Kardiner, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46. What we call "character" in the above statement Kardiner designates by the term "superego system."

<sup>14</sup> See R. Babson, *Religion and Business* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

<sup>15</sup> M. Weber, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (München u. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1924), pp. 302-315.



is seen in the differences between the personalities of modern Nazis, Communists, and middle-class Americans.

*Some nonliterate societies.* The effects of changes in the techniques for controlling the physical world can also be seen in nonliterate societies. Kardiner points out that the introduction of the horse and the rifle among the Comanche Indians had important consequences for their mode of living and for their personalities. Horses could be used as currency, and their accumulation became an important activity, for the chief reward in the ownership of horses was a heightening of prestige.<sup>16</sup> Again, the introduction of the horse as a riding animal remarkably extended the Comanche's physical mobility and thereby increased his control over his environment. More particularly, it enabled him to carry on his activities of daring, which were highly esteemed in his society, and of cattle-rustling, a form of criminality also highly esteemed. The Comanche was stimulated in this behavior by the surrounding white colonies: the English, French, and Spanish. He acted as a middleman racketeer, plundering all the surrounding territory for loot to sell to the three groups of settlers. Kardiner describes his activities thus:

The French needed slave labor and horses. These the Comanche supplied by raiding south into Mexico. The Spanish settlers wanted cattle, and in return the Comanche got guns with which they obliterated all competition with warlike neighbors such as the Apache. When the game of brigandage was up, the Comanche ceased to have a function.<sup>17</sup>

This brigandage and warlikeness was in sharp contrast to the earlier behavior of these Indians. The Plateau tribes from whom the Comanches extended were completely unwarlike. Although neighboring tribes frequently raided them for slaves, the earlier Comanches always ran away instead of fighting. "They considered themselves humble and harmless people, content to spend their time hunting."<sup>18</sup> Although each local unit had its own district, families could move about freely into each other's territory. Despite the exceedingly hard food conditions, there was no punishment for trespass.<sup>19</sup>

After the warlike Comanche was surrounded by the expanding United States, corralled into a reservation, and subdued by force, he underwent his

<sup>16</sup> Kardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. Reprinted by permission of the Columbia University Press.

<sup>18</sup> R. Linton, "The Comanche," in Kardiner, *op. cit.*, chap. iii, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.



final alteration. Having ceased to be a nomadic people by the enforced stabilization of both his and the white man's culture, the Comanche's way of life—his predatory culture—could no longer find an outlet or useful purpose and so ceased to have an effective control over his behavior. The end of brigandage spelled the end of his personality and culture, after only a century of existence.

Comanche culture, as Kardiner observes, affords us an opportunity to study a type of strong, adequate personality organization in an extremely flexible society which, by virtue of the operation of certain historic forces, such as a significant change in the techniques of gaining a livelihood, was destined to rapid extinction. The fate of the Comanche personality demonstrates the validity of one of our basic postulates, namely, that changes in personality are determined by changes in the social milieu in which the individual lives.

Another confirmation of this hypothesis can be seen in the culture and personalities of the Betsileo of Madagascar. The Betsileo people are an ethnic cognate of the Tanala, whose culture they resemble in many ways. The subsistence economy of the Tanala, which consists of dry rice cultivation, is such as to provide relatively easy exploitation of the environment and so guarantee a fairly stable subsistence. There is, accordingly, no anxiety concerning food; each person is confident that he can master the food situation adequately. There is no ritual to make rice grow. This would indicate, as Kardiner points out, that these people have no need for supernatural intervention, or a specific belief system, to aid them in growing a plentiful supply of food.<sup>20</sup>

The Betsileo, on the other hand, while similar in many ways to their kindred Tanala, are full of apprehension regarding their subsistence economy, and have introduced a variety of techniques for reducing the tensions induced by it. In Betsileo there are numerous swamps and valleys which encouraged the method of wet rice cultivation, the basic subsistence economy of these people. The change from dry to wet rice cultivation in Betsileo created important shifts in the basic adaptation of every individual. Let us consider some of these changes briefly.

There was first of all a change in the methods of working. Labor became more individualized and competition more severe. Conflicts which existed only between brothers in the older economy now extended to neighbors and other competitors. As a consequence of these conflicts and competitive

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<sup>20</sup> A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 297-298.



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efforts, many new loyalties and enmities not found in the old (Tanala) culture arose. An exaggerated valuation of skill, enterprise, cunning, treachery, and subjugation of others now developed. A graded hierarchy of rank was established, and this ranking became so rigid, according to Linton and Kardiner, that the differentiations continued after a man's death.<sup>21</sup> The value of property, which was already pronounced in Tanala culture, became so great that it eventually became the sole means of enhancing the self.

While among the Tanala land was cultivated in common, among the Betsileo it became private property. This increased the competitive attitudes of people and made for numerous conflicts. The individual's family ties were now easily broken, for cooperation for a common subsistence was no longer necessary. Because of the increased hostility among individuals, crime increased considerably. The change in the subsistence economy, in other words, brought in its wake many unpleasant consequences. There was a competitive, almost mad, scramble for the fertile soil of the valleys. As a consequence two other things happened: the family organization was permanently broken and the common ownership of land was superseded by private ownership. In the face of these great changes the personality of the Betsileo inevitably suffered, for the efforts to meet the new conditions of life demanded new forms of adaptation and a whole new set of attitudes towards others, and resulted particularly in a pronounced increase in individual anxiety. Since the new rational techniques were unable to diminish or resolve their psychological tensions, they made recourse, as people everywhere tend to do when their science and technology become ineffectual, to various belief systems. Superstitions and compulsive rituals multiplied, and their use to insure safety far exceeded their use by the Tanala, who, because of their greater economic security, had much less need of them. Thus, as Linton and Kardiner point out, in Tanala nail pairings, hair, and the like could not be used for malevolent magic, whereas in Betsileo these bodily parts were endowed with malevolent potency.<sup>22</sup>

The social and psychological situations in Betsileo may be summarized as follows. The dry rice technique of cultivation became useless because of the depletion of suitable land. This required movement from the hills to the swamplands and fertile valleys. Competition for the possession of land became severe. In fact, as Kardiner points out, the whole idea of "possession" became a new way of evaluating life and people.<sup>23</sup> The entire social organization was adversely affected. The family was broken up; the villages

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.



had to be defended for the first time against marauders; slaves who were formerly useless became an economic asset, for they could be used for labor and for ransom. Because wealth could now become accumulated, a rigid system of class differentiation became established. The psychological consequences were noticeable. Hostility increased and intrasocial tensions resulted in hysterical illnesses and the institutionalization of sorcery as a vocation. The scramble for property affected both those who were successful and those who were not. As Kardiner shows, those who had property had to become greatly concerned about defending it. This was done by "awe-inspiring ostentation in the form of dress and manners." Those without property were haunted by the fear of poverty and of oppression from the rich. Even religion, which was relatively free of sorcery, came to reflect the heightened tensions and hostilities of the people, for the concept of "evil spirits," implying aggression by others, was now invented. In short, with the change in the subsistence economy—that is, with the change in the basic technology for mastering the physical environment—the psychological structure of the Betsileo individual broke down.<sup>24</sup>

These differences in culture and the correlative compulsive behavior and anxiety are not associated with racial peculiarities or individual idiosyncrasies. They are, rather, products of a shifting culture, particularly the disturbing consequences of scarcity in the subsistence economy of Betsileo society.

A description and analysis of the rational or empirical systems of a society shows that there is a close relationship between the ideas and techniques by which people control their natural environment and the personality of the people. A knowledge of the science or technology of a people throws light upon the sources and development of their attitudes and behavior. Where the techniques of mastering the external world are adequate, anxiety regarding survival is held to a minimum; where they are ineffectual, anxiety increases and dependency upon other than empirical and utilitarian methods, such as religion, folklore, magic, and mythology, increases greatly.

The changes in the rational systems, such as new techniques of securing subsistence or changed views of the universe and of man's place in it, do not take place without adverse consequences. The introduction of the horse and the rifle in Comanche society, the change from dry to wet rice

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<sup>24</sup> The student is reminded that the factual data concerning the Tanala-Betsileo culture upon which the psychological analyses are based have been furnished by Ralph Linton. See R. Linton, "The Tanala of Madagascar," in A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, chap. vii.



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cultivation in Tanala-Betsileo social organization, and the enormous increase in exact science and technological control of the external world in Western civilization created new tensions and demanded new adjustments. These tensions, Kardiner suggests, call for new "tension relaxors," for the old ones furnished by the belief systems of the past, particularly the religious fantasies, are no longer effective in adjusting man either to his outer world or to the social order and the individuals composing it.<sup>25</sup> We can now easily recognize many of these tensions: economic insecurity, aggressiveness, hostility, fear of loss of affection, fear of failure, retaliation fears, and others.<sup>26</sup>

## The Belief Systems

Although man everywhere is hardheaded and utilitarian in his adjustments to life, utilizing his techniques to wrest from nature her secrets and bend her to his will, these techniques often fail him in the most crucial areas of his daily life. Sooner or later he is confronted with conditions that defy his knowledge and skill and baffle his practical imagination. In these circumstances he appeals to another technique of mastery which we call the *belief systems*. Thus, when the climate is inhospitable and his subsistence economy is threatened, he appeals to practices which, lacking in self-correction and visible proof of defection, always work: prayer, supplication, incantation, intercession, folklore, mythology, or magical rites. Both religion and magical acts are pragmatically incontrovertible. They both operate within a supernatural realm, so that when magic fails, it is not the failure of magic but the more powerful magic aligned against one's own that counts; when religious devotion fails, it is not the failure of religion but the dereliction of the devotee, who may be deficient in humility.

**The Meaning of Belief Systems.** The belief systems are the verbal and conceptual systems and ritualistic devices which man, when he is unable to control his environment by means of his technical skills, is driven to devise and use. Using the term *religion* to encompass the belief systems of all peoples, Radin observes that religion is . . . closely connected with the whole life of man and only when other means of emphasizing and maintaining life values are in the ascendant does it become . . . .

<sup>25</sup> See Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, chap. xiv.

<sup>26</sup> These fears are discussed in K. Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1937) and *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1939).



divorced from the corporate life of the community. This divorce has never taken place among primitive man and religion consequently permeates every phase of his culture.<sup>27</sup>

The belief system, particularly religion proper, is a belief in a power greater than man which normally and in the right circumstances works for man's security and welfare. In societies where it is an integral part of life, as with most nonliterate groups, it is largely unconscious; when it enters the area of awareness, it is usually in periods of danger and crises, when it is specifically called upon to give men courage in the face of disaster. The force that is greater than man need not be a God, but any power that will assure man the help and protection that he needs.

We have described the belief systems as verbal and conceptual. This means that they are fundamentally human *constructs* or inventions for the purpose of giving man a measure of control over the unknown forces of his environment. They are not, however, mere fantasy; for, as Kardiner points out, they always have an experiential source, although this source is usually forgotten. This experiential source is always some crisis, trauma, or deep anxiety from which the individual is trying to escape.<sup>28</sup> The function of the belief systems, as is true of all the integrative systems, is to aid him in adjusting himself—particularly to help him to give some rational account of the irrational and threatening factors of life and thereby obtain relief from anxiety and other painful tensions. The rationalizing and tension-reducing quality of a belief system is shown in the following passage by Kardiner:

"There is a supreme being who observes my behavior. He has the attributes of omnipotence and omniscience, etc. If I do wrong I will be punished. If I suffer I will be reinstated." Once this system is accepted as a reality, any number of rational systems can be devised to "prove" it, to modify it, or to render it workable.<sup>29</sup>

**Belief Systems of Some Nonliterate Societies.** As with all integrative systems it is easier to describe and analyze the belief systems of nonliterate than of Western societies; and it is enormously easier to trace the effects of belief systems upon the behavior of primitive men. For this reason we shall first examine the belief systems of a few simple cultures.

<sup>27</sup> By permission from *Social Anthropology*, by P. Radin. Copyright, 1933. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

<sup>28</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.



The belief systems of the Zuñi Indians of Arizona and New Mexico are very elaborate. This is particularly true of their religion. The chief religious preoccupation is rainfall. If the Zuñis are asked the purpose of any religious observance, their answer is always: "It is for rain."<sup>30</sup> Fertility is of prime importance, for it is the ultimate guarantor of an adequate subsistence economy. Benedict points out the importance of rain in the ceremonial rites of the Zuñis:

Fertility is above all else the blessing within the bestowal of the gods, and in the desert country of the Zuñi plateau, rain is the prime requisite for the growth of crops. The retreats of the priests, the dances of the masked gods, even many of the activities of the medicine societies are judged by whether or not there has been rain. To "bless with water" is the synonym of all blessing. Thus, in the prayers, the fixed epithet the gods apply in blessing to the rooms in Zuñi to which they come, is "water-filled," their ladders are "water-ladders," and the scalp taken in warfare is "the water-filled covering." The dead, too, come back in the rain clouds, bringing the universal blessing. People say to the children when the summer afternoon rain clouds come up the sky, "Your grandfathers are coming," and the reference is not to individual dead relatives, but applies impersonally to all forbears. The masked gods also are the rain and when they dance they constrain their own being—rain—to descend upon the people. The priests, again, in their retreat before their altars sit motionless and withdrawn for eight days, summoning the rain.<sup>31</sup>

Rain plays an important role in the religion of the Zuñis because their rational systems—their techniques and skills—do not suffice them in overcoming the dry climate. They are thrown back upon a system of beliefs and magical practices—the propitiation of the rain god—to give them fertility and allay their fears. Their religion thus aids them in draining off their most severe anxieties by guaranteeing them the fertility which they need. If the Zuñi Indian is a man of dignity, affability, and serenity, as all observers agree, these characteristics are in large part derived from his reassuring religion. Even his prayer expresses his sure faith and the serenity of his spirit. As Benedict points out, his prayer is never an outpouring of the human heart. It is always marked by urbanity and lack of intensity. It is "always mild and ceremonious in form, asking for orderly life, pleasant days, shelter from violence."<sup>32</sup>

This preoccupation with supernatural aid is very different from that of a culture which relies more upon individual mastery of the external world.

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<sup>30</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 63.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.



The Comanche Indians, as we have seen, were a highly independent people who relied mostly on their own technique of maraudery and brigandage—an unethical form of conduct, of course, from the civilized point of view—for their livelihood. The Comanche did not rely on dreaming and visions, for achievement of the goods of life was a consequence of direct action by the entire group in cooperative functioning. By the same token he showed little interest in receiving the help and protection of his deity. "Accomplishment and not obedience and conformity," Kardiner points out, "becomes the technique of social approval."<sup>33</sup>

Since the Comanches relied on the pooled resources of the entire community, they had little cause to develop neurotic anxiety. This fact, Kardiner believes, is supported by the relative absence of malevolent magic. The only time that it was likely to be used was with the increasing infirmity of advancing age. There was a minimum of reliance on the deity, for in most situations in life his aid was not needed. Indeed, of all the cultures we have analyzed, the Comanche was least dominated by belief systems of the religious type, and such beliefs regarding the deity as existed played an insignificant role in rendering their society stable. The evidence suggests that the high degree of adaptability which characterized Comanche culture was a consequence of the fact that they were minimally dominated by their simple belief systems. If, in view of our expressed declaration that the function of the belief systems is to adjust man to his world, the foregoing statement sounds paradoxical, it is important to add that these systems are no guarantee of adjustment and security. On the contrary, they may actually impair such adaptability. This is seen in Tanala, as described by Kardiner on the basis of Linton's ethnographic data. Kardiner writes:

The external reality can be manipulated in a limited number of ways if perceived in accordance with the analogy of an all powerful father and an obedient child. When the father's power gives out, as it did in Tanala, only disorganized aggression and panic could ensue. The individual who deals with the outer world on the basis of obedience can develop no sense of responsibility for his own fate and cannot therefore develop those manipulative powers of which he is capable. The intensity and cruelty of an exacting superego is no surrogate for responsibility for oneself. All the suffering the individual inflicts on himself as a consequence of superego demands has no relevancy to the external world, or to the difficulties within the social order.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 87.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press. The reference to Tanala in the above quotation is to the Betsileo branch of the tribe, where a shift from dry to wet rice cultivation took place.



**Belief Systems of Western Man.**

While at first sight the analysis of the belief systems of Western man seems to be fraught with difficulty, their very organization and systematization makes them easier to isolate and their effects upon the personality easier to trace than is initially apparent.

We are prone to think that our belief systems are vastly different from and superior to those of nonliterate societies. Western man is quick to describe the religion and folklore of primitive man as superstitions. It is well to note that, as someone has remarked, superstition is merely a religion one does not believe in. If the elaborate ritual of the Zuni Indian seems odd to us and his boundless faith in the power of his rain god seems incredible, we need only to look about us for similar manifestations. Attempts at magical control of physical forces abound in our own society. We pray for peace or for victory on the battlefield. On May 22, 1935, the people of Colorado joined in prayer, in answer to a formal appeal by Governor Johnson of that state, for "an abundance" of rain. He sent messengers to the governors of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and New Mexico, urging them to pray likewise.<sup>35</sup> The purpose and the mechanism underlying Western man's belief systems are the same as those of primitive man: by "magical" appeal to a superior force or being to aid man to gain security when his practical techniques—his rational systems—are inadequate.

If we bear in mind the quality of the belief systems and their role in primitive society, more particularly the changes that took place in the transition to Betsileo from Tanala, we find a similar situation operating in Western civilization. The Thomistic cosmology of the Mediaeval Church resembled that of Tanala. Each posited the existence of a powerful father whose help could be had by the obedient child for the asking. In Tanala the aid came directly from the powerful father, whereas in Christian cosmology it took place through his intercession with natural law. Indeed, natural law, as Kardiner points out, is only one among many instances of divine will.<sup>36</sup> Since natural law and divine will are synonymous, the devotee does not bend to natural law but submits to the divine will. His security still lies in obedience to the powerful father, not to the world of nature which might be manipulatable by science and technology. Under this belief system Mediaeval man derived a maximum of security and freedom from anxiety. For a long time Christianity was highly successful in adjusting man to his outer world. God, the father, was always there to help.

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<sup>35</sup> L. L. Bernard, *Social Control* (New York: Macmillan, 1939), p. 456.

<sup>36</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 43.



There took place in Western society, however, two important events which considerably altered man's conception of himself and his relations to the external world. One of these momentous events was the rise of modern science; the other was the Protestant Reformation. The first freed man from the control by the deity and gave him control over himself; the second made him an individual capable of finding his own salvation. Modern science freed man's mind for inquiry into the world around him and thereby opened the way to a vastly different conception of the world. The Reformation enabled him, in time, to expend his energies in unfettered economic pursuits and the accumulation of wealth. The important consequence of these changes in the conceptions of man and the world was that they oriented man to life on the basis of economic activities. The belief system, while still operating in man's life, now had less immediate influence in molding his social life, which was increasingly ordered by means of scientific and economic ideas. The belief system, or religion, ceased to be the main arena for conflicts over social issues. Luther, and even more significantly Calvin, challenged the existing conception of divine law as operative in the social order, and through redefinition of this law gave rise to a new conception of the social order. In time their conception of a positive law paved the way for an effective "union of science with the objectives of social well-being."<sup>37</sup>

An important consequence of this union of science and social goals—and also of the collateral fact that there was too much uncertainty as to the real intercessors between man and God (Christ? the Virgin Mary? St. Anne?)—was that the Church became increasingly less effective as an integrative force in human life.<sup>38</sup> The defection of the Church as a psychological stabilizer resulted, too, from the growing conception that all phenomena, including human behavior, can be explained by means of mechanical processes.<sup>39</sup> The mechanical conception of all phenomena was applied, of course, to production, and the manufacturing technique finally replaced the handicraft system by the end of the seventeenth century. Security and self-esteem were now sought less and less in divine salvation and more and more in prosperity and the possession of worldly goods. In time the middle classes, who had successfully applied the new outlook to

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>38</sup> E. Fromm, *Entwicklung des Christusbildes* (Imago, 1930).

<sup>39</sup> F. Borkenau, *Der Übergang vom Feudalen zum Bürglichen Weltbild* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1934), chap. i. See also H. Laski, *The Rise of Liberalism* (New York: Harper, 1936).



the manufacture of goods, acquired dominance over religion and eventually over the state. This is known as "democracy," the culture under which most of the Western world lives.

This changed outlook could hardly have taken place without affecting the personalities of men. The stabilizing function of the belief system—Western religion—was irreparably damaged. As Kardiner shows again and again, the Calvinistic break with the Church increased man's psychological burdens. The war between the belief system of the past and the new rational systems of science and technology divided the self and increased the tensions of man. We must quote at length from Kardiner:

The old church, to be sure, maintained that man was born tainted with original sin but from baptism onward was offered continuous opportunity for the achievement of salvation. This task the church facilitated by reproducing the parent-child relationship, thus externalizing the superego (or conscience) mechanisms and by prorating pain as advance payment on suffering in the future world, or substituting a small for a greater punishment. There was tyranny in this, but there was also love, on the pattern of parental love for obedience. The Calvinist dogma destroyed the externalized conscience and placed it where it could wield far more despotic power than was ever done by the church. The Reformation internalized conscience in return for a freedom from externalized tyranny which shackled self-expression along lines which had become imperative. From the idea that success is a sure proof of virtue to a contempt for the poor and unsuccessful is only one step. However, the most startling thing about the Reformation is that, whereas it internalized conscience, this conscience still operated on the same factors which were emphasized by the old church, chiefly the pleasure drives the repression of which were fundamental in the family disciplines. The doctrine exerted no restricting influence on the social and mercantile practices of the middle class; if it had, in all probability the support of that group would have been withdrawn.<sup>40</sup>

The "internalized conscience" of the new belief system produced some of the most patent personality traits of Western man, particularly in North America. According to Kardiner, the Puritan is one example. The Puritan sought salvation through the renunciation of pleasure, especially those forms which were condemned and controlled by his parents in his childhood. Self-discipline was thus practiced not from fear of supernatural sanctions but by the demands of a compulsive superego. As a result, the Puritans became so overburdened with psychological tensions that they developed hypochondria and other anxieties. Kardiner points out that the

<sup>40</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 440. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.



extensive literature on masturbation in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and on the dire consequences of its practice is related to this internalization of conscience. He says further that the internalized conscience shifted the psychological burden from fear of supernatural punishment to fear of physical and mental illness.

We hope it is clear from our discussion thus far that while the chief function of every belief system is to adjust man and secure his stability, it can fulfill this function only in the proportion to which it is an expression of the basic practices of a culture. When these practices change, the belief system will eventually change also. Thus, when supernatural sanctions in the form of post-mortem rewards and punishment gave way under the impact of modern science, they were replaced by the rewards of success. Belief systems were not rejected but transformed. Fewer and fewer men today can get relief from tension through the traditional belief systems; more and more of them now seek it in the form of success, especially economic success. Because success is so important in modern life, failure comes to take on the same painful anxiety as punishment after death did in the past. The psychological burdens thus placed upon modern man are very great. These burdens could be relieved by a return to the earlier belief systems, which is highly improbable, for the old systems are incompatible with the secularized and industrialized character of modern life; or they could be relieved by a new orientation to the world, one in which the individual is thoroughly conditioned by scientific habits of thought, but this seems a remote possibility.

**The Dilemma of Modern Man.** Modern man has an unmatched control over his physical environment, a degree of freedom seldom possessed in the past, and the means—mostly economic—of commanding status and esteem never before equaled. Judging by the instability and tension which plague him today, the incidence of neurotic and psychotic breakdowns, the conflicting goals, and the international tensions, the utilization of the rational systems (science and technology) has not provided him with a basic stability and peace. Besides valuing success above all else, modern man has been impelled to seek other adaptive mechanisms, mechanisms to give him a measure of relief from tension. As a result, he has developed a modern folklore.

**Modern folklore.** Kardiner calls attention to the role of folklore in contemporary American life.<sup>41</sup> American urban life—and this

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 368–370. See also J. West, *Plainville, U.S.A.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).



pattern is infecting our smaller communities—is saturated with the folklore of escape. This folklore is manifested in the popular music, in radio characters, and—above all—in the movies.<sup>42</sup> The fantasy enjoyment obtained from these forms of amusement has not so far been measured but their importance could hardly be exaggerated. Certainly for millions they provide at least temporary and intermittent security. It would be difficult to account for their hold on the American people on other grounds. They probably give modern man more comfort than the belief system of religion, which is much professed and defended but little believed and practiced.

The character of the entertainment on the screen and the radio is as segmental as the lives of most of those who look and listen. Its atomistic nature is clearly manifested in two types of program with dismayingly wide appeal, the "soap opera" and the quiz program. The "soap operas," which appeal so widely to the American housewife, "require continuous attention," as a British anthropologist pointed out recently, "if a minimum of concentration. Like the films . . . they provide mass-produced fantasies to inform and supplement private daydreaming."<sup>43</sup>

Such quiz programs as "Information Please" are believed to be not only entertaining but "educational" as well. The atomistic nature of this type of program is even more glaring, since certainly knowledge ought to make sense, instead of being a form of informational gymnastics in which the pleasure derived is that of humiliating the experts.<sup>44</sup> What actually takes place in this kind of program, according to Gorer, is that the memory of the "experts" is tested for "their retention of irrelevant and recondite facts." No intelligence of any sort is involved, he says, but "merely the recollection of abstruse quotations and snippets of history."<sup>45</sup>

The popular songs or current "hits" are rich source material for the study of modern escapism. Their motifs are simple and transparent, yet reflective of an intense need for safety and security: "nostalgia, loneliness, broken romance, idealization of woman, especially the mother, who is generally deserted but is looked on as a protector."<sup>46</sup>

The fictitious characters of the movies—the movie stars—have been de-

<sup>42</sup> At this writing it would be premature to assess the role of television in contemporary life, but one can hardly be amiss in asserting that it is destined to become the most widespread of all means of escaping the tensions and monotony of life.

<sup>43</sup> Gorer, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>44</sup> Herta Herzog, in P. Lazarsfeld and F. Stanton, eds., *Radio Research* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1941).

<sup>45</sup> Gorer, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 369.



scribed often and their outworn but appealing themes have been analyzed almost endlessly. The almost unfailing themes are few but seductive:

... the idealized progress from rags to riches, the common aspirations to beauty, wealth, fame, adulation. They enact in their stereotyped dramas the success story and Cinderella motif *ad nauseum* [sic], but stop when money or love is achieved. They serve the function of fantasy gratification of needs for security, power and sexual happiness, generally denied to most.<sup>47</sup>

This yearning for the never-never-land does not stop with the character of the actors on the screen, but follows them avidly into every recess of their daily lives, real or fabricated.

Their lives are lived in a blaze of unending publicity. Their houses, their husbands or wives, their clothes, their interests, the books they read—when they read a book—their hobbies, what they do on holiday, all these are retailed in minute detail to an audience which seems to have an endless appetite for any scrap of information vouchsafed to it on these themes.<sup>48</sup>

Various studies point to the conclusion that the motion picture is a form of contemporary folklore which gives more comfort and security to the American people than formal religion. From the lonely and perplexed Charlie Chaplin bum through Mickey Mouse to Charlie McCarthy the longings and failings of the ordinary mortal find a satisfying, if brief, expression. Charlie McCarthy epitomizes this lonely striving to be free and yet secure as well as any character in modern folklore. He is, as Kardiner describes him,

Mr. Everyman, the wooden dummy, who is the puppet of powerful forces. Yet he constantly berates his master, calls attention to his defects—his stinginess, baldness, and failure with women. He resents disciplines and has profound disrespect for his teachers, whom he maligns mercilessly. His impudence can only be halted every now and then by calling his attention to the fact that he is nothing but a block of wood which can be sliced into a Venetian blind, or in which no one but a woodpecker could take any interest. The polarities of abasement and cruelty are epitomized in this amusing creature of fiction.<sup>49</sup>

Then, commenting on the psychological meaning of contemporary fictional characters, Kardiner writes:

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.

<sup>48</sup> H. J. Laski, *The American Democracy* (New York: Viking, 1948), p. 679. Reprinted by permission.

<sup>49</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 370. Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.



These figures of contemporary folklore are more effective in comforting the individual than is religion—though they both have the same function. The current folklore promises no rewards but it bolsters morale and self-esteem by the spectacle of man rejecting current ideals and expressing contempt for them. Movies with the moral that “wrong doesn’t pay” have the same bolstering effect. For those who are lacking in enterprise such morals have an exhilarating effect and sustain hope.<sup>50</sup>

**Relation between Rational and Belief Systems.** The rational and belief systems, while they express themselves in different forms, are nevertheless closely related, in that both are integrative systems by means of which man adapts himself to or controls his environment. There is no basic logical difference, according to Kardiner, in the thinking processes of the two systems but only in the content or type of data on which the thinking processes are exercised.<sup>51</sup> The utilization of both systems, furthermore, is linked with the maternal care of the infant and child. Good maternal care, says Kardiner, makes the child enterprising and self-confident. Poor care, especially when it leads to excessive dependency on the mother, stunts the growth of curiosity and the capacity for mastery. A frequent consequence of this dependency is an excessive reliance on the belief systems—religion, folklore, mythology—with the further consequence that the individual is burdened with the difficult problem, which man has not succeeded in solving, of explaining, harmonizing, and justifying the basic elements of the rational systems.

The two systems, finally, are connected in and with the mechanism of rationalization. Each is trying to give what appears to be an acceptable account of the world and man’s place in it. The most complex forms of rationalization which man has thus far devised to “explain” life and man are the social ideologies.<sup>52</sup> We now turn to these, the third integrative system.

### The Social Ideologies

The term *ideology* is often used in rather loose fashion to refer to practically any set of ideas which an individual has about anything.

In our discussion of social ideologies, *ideology* will have a more exact meaning. We shall use the term to refer to those mental fictions

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* Reprinted by permission of Columbia University Press.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39, footnote.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.



which arise in men's minds to conceal the true nature of social conditions. The main functions of ideologies are to maintain the *status quo* and to promise social salvation to man.

**The Meaning of Social Ideology.** Mannheim, in his book *Ideology and Utopia*, differentiates between *ideologies* and *utopias*. He defines an ideology as a set of preconceptions or "prejudices" held by those in established positions of prestige and power. He defines a utopia as a set of articulated desires, or "wish dreams," which aims to expose the ideologies and to restructure or transform the existing social order.<sup>53</sup> An ideology may thus be defined as a more or less consistent set of ideas which expresses the goals of a particular group or class.<sup>54</sup> Since it embodies goals or ideals, it does not refer to reality, however much the goals may be rationalized to appear real, logical, and morally based. Like the belief systems, to which it is related, an ideology is a myth constructed to achieve, not post-mortem rewards, but social salvation. Although, like the belief systems, ideologies are myths, they are myths describing the social world, real or imagined, not the world of the unknown. A social ideology is the myth transformed into the concept of social welfare.

The term *myth* should neither startle nor puzzle the reader, for we are using it in a neutral sense. The term refers to all the "value-impregnated beliefs and notions that men hold, that they live by or live for."<sup>55</sup> We can say that society has always been "held together by a myth-system, a complex of dominating thought-forms that determines and sustains all its activities. All social relations, the very texture of human society, are myth-born and myth-sustained."<sup>56</sup> The myths arise from and play upon man's social nature, and "bring to government a ratification without which no prince or parliament, no tyrant or dictator, could ever rule a people."<sup>57</sup>

Anthropologists are fairly well agreed today that political organization in some form exists in every society. It ranges, as in historic societies, from rigid theocracy, absolute monarchy, to "liberal" democracy. What is lacking in nonliterate societies is *representative* government, a political form which existed nowhere until very recent times.<sup>58</sup> Political organization in most nonliterate societies is informal and so does not take on the character of

<sup>53</sup> See K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), chaps. ii, iv.

<sup>54</sup> See G. L. DeGré, *Society and Ideology* (New York: Pvt. printed, Columbia University Bookstore, 1943).

<sup>55</sup> R. M. MacIver, *The Web of Government* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>58</sup> Radin, *op. cit.*, p. 27.



something external to the people's daily life. However, as long as the organization fulfills the task of regulating the affairs of a society, it must be regarded as a political or governmental institution.<sup>59</sup>

Thus in every nonliterate society there is "government," involving distinctions of status, leadership, prestige, and the like. In contrast to the differentiations of historic societies, those of simple cultures lie more easy on every individual, are felt less as external compulsions, and are more completely sustained by their customs. The basic function of preliterate social ideology, however, is the same as that of any other society, namely, the attainment of social welfare. The essential difference is that in nonliterate societies the social ideologies are intimately intertwined with both the rational and the belief systems, whereas in Western civilization they have become powerful political creeds which have utilized the rational and belief systems merely as weapons for furthering special interests.

*Social myth in Zuñi.* In the Zuñi culture power relationships are reduced to an almost negligible minimum. Indeed, personal authority is thoroughly disparaged. A man avoids office as he does a plague. As Benedict remarks, he may have an office thrust upon him, but he never seeks it.<sup>60</sup> The good man is the man who is unwilling to take office. When an office in the council must be filled, that man must take it whose every excuse has been successfully battered down. But taking the post gives him no authority, for the basic and over-all expectation is for each individual to identify himself so completely with the group that the latter is always the functioning unit of authority. Benedict writes:

The Zuñi people . . . devote themselves to the constituted forms of their society. They sink individuality in them. They do not think of office, and possession of priestly bundles, as steps in the upward path of ambition. A man when he can afford it gets himself a mask in order to increase the number of things "to live by" in his household, and the number of masks his kiva commands. He takes his due part in the calendric rituals and at great expense builds a new house to entertain the kachina priest impersonations at Shalako, but he does it with a degree of anonymity and lack of personal reference that is hard to duplicate in other cultures.<sup>61</sup>

The concern of each in Zuñi society is the welfare of all. They pool their

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<sup>59</sup> See Herskovitz, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

<sup>60</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 99.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. A *kiva* is a ceremonial chamber; a *kachina* is a masked god of whom the kachina priest is a subordinate; and *Shalako* is the winter masked god ceremony.



energies, even on the newly cultivated field that may occasionally belong to someone as private property, to fill the common corn storeroom. The same is true of their houses: the men build them jointly and, like the corn which they cultivate, the houses become the property of the women. Co-operation for a common goal, the welfare of the group, is the binding force that holds this people together into a stable and coherent group. Such psychological traits as individual status, the prestige of office, personal success, the ego-enhancing power of authority, and the like, have no value, are not sought after, and are not marks of Zuñi personalities.

*Social myth in Dobu.* The Dobuans are a Melanesian people living on an island off the southern shore of eastern New Guinea. Their contrast to the Zuñis of our Southwest is remarkable. "They are lawless and treacherous. Every man's hand is against every other man."<sup>62</sup>

Dobu is not, however, as Benedict points out, a state of anarchy. While mutual distrust and treachery abound, while there are no chiefs and no political organization in the strict sense, there is sufficient social organization to which the individual may turn for backing. This consists of the permanent group of the mother's line.

Living, they own their gardens and their house sites in a common village. Dead, they are buried in a common plot on ancestral land. Every village has at its core a graveyard overgrown with brilliant-leaved croton shrubs. In it lie the distaff line of one's mother, male and female, the owners of the village during their lives, buried now at its centre. Around it are grouped the platform houses of the living owners, the matrilineal line. Within this group inheritance passes and co-operation exists. It is called the "mothers' milk," the *susu*, and consists of a female line of descent and the brothers of these women in each generation. The children of these brothers are not included; they belong to their mother's villages, groups toward which there is usually a major enmity.<sup>63</sup>

Toward members outside his own *susu* the Dobuan can vent his traditional hostilities. Everyone possesses magic and uses it on his neighbor to destroy his harvest, to cause disease and death. Marriage creates a serious problem, for the new husband and wife must live in a *susu* where one is an outsider. But the Dobuans have a logical, if psychologically pernicious, solution for this problem. The couple must live in alternate years in the village of the husband and the village of the wife. During the residence of each in the other's *susu*, life becomes difficult for him, for he is an alien

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.



upon whom are heaped indignities and obscene abuses. Tensions mount, suspiciousness reigns, and outraged feelings prevail. This is in sharp contrast to the life of the Zuñis, where the security and welfare of each is provided by the security and welfare of all.

From our descriptions of Zuñi and Dobu life, it can be seen that social ideologies are part and parcel of the total social organization of each group. This is characteristic of all nonliterate people. It is therefore both more difficult to describe their social arrangements by the term *social ideology* and to trace its effects on their personalities than in complex societies. We turn, therefore, to Western civilization, where social ideologies, particularly today, play a disproportionate role in the behavior of man.

**Social Ideologies in Western Culture.** In Mediaeval society, as Kardiner points out, the religious belief system played the same role as social ideologies do today.<sup>64</sup> We are inclined to go even further in asserting that the two were practically identical, just as they are in nonliterate societies. In Mediaeval Europe the Church (belief system) and the State (social ideology) were for all practical purposes the same. Although it is true that the Mediaeval Church did not regulate social life directly, it controlled it effectively by its regulation of post-mortem existence.

With the advent of modern science and the Protestant Reformation, the need for a social doctrine of salvation became more urgent. Having lost its power to the State, the Church had left for regulation those areas of life which had nothing to do with man's social and economic welfare. The myth of "the economic man" replaced the myth of "the spiritual man."<sup>65</sup> Consequently man's life on this earth, which was becoming rapidly more important to him, needed a rationalization or myth to guarantee its material security. Warring ideologies quickly sprang up to fill the gap left by the receding religious doctrines, and the struggle among them has been growing in intensity. At this writing the conflict between "democracy" and "communism," the two dominant social ideologies, has reached a stage where the fate of the world is hanging in the balance. Democratic governments espouse the doctrine of private initiative, or *laissez faire*, whereas communistic governments stress collective techniques for the satisfaction of needs. The former is "self-assertive"; the latter, "collectivistic."

A careful survey of the contemporary scene reveals that social ideologies

<sup>64</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 372.

<sup>65</sup> See P. F. Drucker, *The End of Economic Man* (New York: John Day, 1939), chap. iv.



dominate the life of man, particularly in our urban centers.<sup>66</sup> As we have pointed out in describing modern belief systems, social welfare, rather than a happy post-mortem existence, is the chief desire of contemporary man. In social ideologies, contrasted with belief systems, rewards are not deferred. Salvation is achieved through individual success or through social well-being. Accordingly the kind of social ideology a person will espouse is indicative—with exceptions, of course—of his social status or class position and of the nature of his dominant attitudes.<sup>67</sup>

The dominant social ideologies, like the rational and the belief systems, have produced tensions and insecurities which they have not anticipated or been able to eliminate. On the contrary, these ideologies are the sources of an unprecedented crisis in Western civilization which has brought enormous instability of personality in its wake. The construction of a social order in which the individual has neither a meaningful place nor a clear function has left him without a clear notion of his place in the social scheme. When his existence is in jeopardy, what can he do but feel lost and insecure? When his own social order has no rational basis, no scientific validation, his own beliefs are but temporary makeshifts which yield only a dubious and intermittent security.

The failure of modern ideologies in providing man with security throws doubt on the efficacy of the dominant values and institutions of life. But its profoundest effect, as Drucker points out,

is on the fundamental concept on which all society is founded: the concept which man has of his own nature and his function and place in society. The proof that the economic freedom of the individual does not automatically or dialectically lead to equality, has destroyed the very concept of the nature of man on which both capitalism and socialism were based: Economic Man.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

Our survey of the integrative systems by means of which man aims to adapt himself to his natural and sociocultural environments has called

<sup>66</sup> The distinction between urban and non-urban (village, small town) culture should not mislead the student into believing that social ideologies are inoperative in non-urban culture. There is reason to believe that social ideologies play a minor role in the small community because self-assertiveness is less overtly expressed and because the "small-town" finds considerable outlet for balked wishes in a "refined" form of hatred, particularly gossip and ridicule of all things modern. See West, *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup> See Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. 372.

<sup>68</sup> Drucker, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Reprinted by permission of the author.



attention to three universal techniques of orientation: (1) the rational systems, whose clearest forms are found in science and technology; (2) the belief systems, consisting most characteristically of religion and folklore; and (3) the social ideologies, which embody the goal of social salvation or social well-being.

In Western society, owing to the growth of science and technology and the consequent secularization of life, the belief systems have lost most of their earlier function of orienting man to the external world, particularly the world of the unknown. Accordingly, modern man seeks his salvation far less in post-mortem existence and exceedingly more in various forms of success, especially economic success. To this end he has devised various social myths by which he hopes to attain his well-being.

The social myths for the attainment of social salvation are devised and manipulated by modern medicine men. These medicine men perform their work in various disguises: as "politicians, radio commentators, journalists, clergymen, and certain 'scientists,' so-called."<sup>69</sup>

If man is to achieve a high measure of cultural and psychological stability—a society and a person relatively free from upsetting or destructive tensions—the integrative systems he lives by must be consistent with the role-acting which a society imposes upon him. Thus, if one integrative system admonishes him to be humble and meek, to be submissive and turn the other cheek, and another one urges him to show initiative and competitive striving to get to the top of the social heap, instability will be the most likely outcome. Modern society is shot through with such contradictions. The divergent reference groups in which modern man's self is involved are microcosmic reflections of the warring macrocosmic integrative systems of contemporary civilization. While we make no pretense of knowledge as to the fate of the integrative systems, one can be as certain as one can be in this uncertain world, that the personality will always reflect them in the end.

Finally, while the function of the integrative systems is to foster adaptation, it does not follow that they invariably make for stability of the personality. Some of the systems result in great psychological strain, but as long as they are sanctified by his culture, the individual must accept them. If he does otherwise, he is a deviant or a cultural misfit.

<sup>69</sup> MacIver, *op. cit.*, chap. iii.



## CHAPTER 9 :

# Cultural Norms and Behavior

THE TERMS *social norms* and *cultural norms*, especially the former, appear frequently in recent social-psychological writings.

In our discussions of self-involvement and attitudes we made frequent references to social norms. Sherif, who first made systematic use of the term *social norms*, referred by it to the values and standards of a group which serve as "frames of reference" for individual behavior. We shall use the term *cultural norms* in the present chapter, rather than *social norms*, because we wish especially to emphasize, not the social-interactional nature of behavior which we have already analyzed in detail in Part II, but the wider area of the *cultural heritage* which molds an individual's personality



## The Nature and Functions of Cultural Norms

From a broad cultural point of view values or norms are the established codes, or "existing social rules of behavior."<sup>1</sup> Apart from them personality cannot be understood, for personality is the organization of the rules of behavior into a more or less consistent pattern of responses. Behavior may be described as normal or abnormal depending upon its conformity with the existing social rules, or with the cultural norms of the group. From the standpoint of cultural norms, therefore, maladjustment in one culture may be described as adequate adjustment in another. Thus, in India, where trances have a high value, people will have supernatural experiences. In ancient Greece, and in some nonliterate cultures today, where homosexuality is institutionalized, i.e., socially acceptable, homosexuals are normal. In societies such as the Kwakiutl and the United States, where the accumulation of wealth is a vital objective, people will strive with all their energies to amass possessions.<sup>2</sup> The socialized responses of the individual vary with the forms of culture.

**Norms as Motivating Factors.** Human behavior can be understood only when in addition to the organic heritage of the individual we also know what life means to him as that meaning is determined for him by the norms of his group. Consider the following case cited by Reinhardt. It is that of a mountain farmer of the South who moved to a city where he accepted a job in a railroad yard. This job required that he work on Sunday, an expectation which was quite at variance with his rural upbringing. Despite the fact that he was pleased with his new work, he was greatly disturbed that he was required to work on Sunday. His condition is reflected in his own words:

I could not keep my mind on my work. I had a guilty feeling. I could hardly sleep at night. The words of the Lord, "Thou shalt not," tormented me. One night—one Sunday night after I had worked all day in the yards—the Lord came to me in my sleep. He pointed a finger at me and he said, as plain as I'm talking to you now, "Joe!" he said, "I'm ashamed of you sellin' your soul for wages." Well, Mister, I couldn't ever go back to the yards any more.<sup>3</sup>

He did not, indeed, go back to his job. He got another one which in .....

<sup>1</sup> W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (Boston: Badger, 1918-1920), Vol. II, p. 1128.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal," *J. Gen. Psychol.*, 10 (1934), 59-82.

<sup>3</sup> J. M. Reinhardt, *Social Psychology* (Chicago: Lippincott, 1938), p. 253.



volved heavier work, longer hours, and lower wages. To those who did not understand the values which motivated him, his behavior seemed foolish. A "typical" urban industrial worker might be very glad to work on Sunday, for often he can get time-and-a-half in wages. But to the rural Southerner to whom the Sabbath was holy it could mean only the transgression of a sacred custom. Consequently, harmony within himself was restored only by the reorientation of his behavior in conformity with what life meant to him. His behavior must be judged in the light of the social norms prevailing in his group.

An individual does not act as he pleases nor satisfy his wants in arbitrary fashion. He behaves in accordance with the demands of his culture. Not only interpersonal relations in the wider sense but even perception, imagery, and memory, as we have shown, are influenced by the culture pattern. The dominant norms of the group give man a standardized interpretation of the world in which he lives and he tends ordinarily to adhere to the meaning which they provide him.

**Divergent Norms and Psychic Stresses.** The conformity demanded by the norms of a group always results in some degree of inner tension. It is not claiming too much to say that a fully balanced and harmonious life does not exist. However harmonious it may appear on the surface, closer analysis usually discloses inner tensions. The Zuni culture seems to be "ideal" in many ways. The dislocations which characterize American urban culture, and the psychological tenseness which characterizes the American urban individual are certainly lacking. Its people work together for the commonweal; its individuals show none of the drive and hectic enterprise of the typical American. Outside the pooled energies spent in gaining their living, their lives are devoted to the calm pursuit of ceremonials and pleasant living. Intensity in any form is carefully eschewed.<sup>4</sup>

Their calm exteriors, however, and their sobriety in all things, are belied by their surreptitious criticism and defamation of others. There are angry and quarrelsome people among them, and grudges are held and cherished.<sup>5</sup> In this way their competitive relations with others, though outwardly condemned, find expression in a socially accepted form. Like all behavior in the face of conflicting norms, strain and psychological tension are the price the Zunis pay for their cooperative living. Psychologically considered, the

<sup>4</sup> R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> R. Benedict, "Zuni Mythology," *Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology*, Vol. XXI, 1934, p. xix.



cultural life of the Zuñis is contradictory: it arouses individual interests and then promptly represses them. Thus, they are not encouraged to accomplish anything in their own right; yet, at the same time they get *recognition* for not striving and achieving. Accordingly every Zuñi child is impelled to seek recognition, even though indifference to achievement is considered one of the greatest virtues. While we have no satisfactory data to support the claim, it is reasonable to suppose that individual conflicts and neurotic stresses must be far more numerous than ethnologists have led us to believe. As Murphy plausibly suggests, "the Zuñi achieve their outwardly co-operative pattern at a considerable psychological cost; they experience non-competitive living at a considerable strain."<sup>6</sup>

Another source of disharmony in Zuñi life is found in their religion. There is a definite conflict of norms in their religious life. Zuñi children are early impressed with the great power of the supernatural beings who are used by the parents to discipline them. The "scare kachinas," or punitive masked gods, frighten the children. During initiation ceremonies the gods whip the boys with their yucca whips. This whipping, as Benedict points out, is a rite of exorcism, not of punishment in the ordinary sense, for the Zuñis do not use physical punishment on their children.<sup>7</sup> At the final whipping ceremony, when the boys are about fourteen years old, the kachinas remove their masks and put them on the boys' heads. This is an extraordinary revelation, for the children discover that the gods are their own parents and neighbors. The discovery is also a source of terror. Goldfrank suggests that the fear instilled in the children by the scare kachinas and by their discovery of parental deception in the form of the masked gods must have permanent damaging effects upon the personality.<sup>8</sup>

Comparative studies of culture show that even the most stable societies are subject to stress and strain. While most simple societies are highly integrated, none is characterized by a complete congruence of one factor with all the others. Western society, where a high degree of rationalization of many aspects of life has taken place, particularly in economic and industrial activities, is nevertheless the most unstable of all. The instability is due in large part to the extraordinary mobility and change which permeate almost every important department of contemporary life. These have pro-

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<sup>6</sup> G. Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origin and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947), p. 806.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 69.

<sup>8</sup> E. S. Goldfrank, "Socialization, Personality, and the Structure of Pueblo Society, with Particular Reference to Hopi and Zuñi," *Amer. Anthropol.*, 47 (1945), 516-539.



duced many conflicts in the norms of contemporary society. On the basis of our knowledge of both nonliterate and Western societies we can formulate a very important proposition regarding the relation between cultural conflict and personal stress: When a basic element in the social framework of values toward which a person is oriented changes, he is thrown into confusion or distress because his life style is no longer socially adjusting.<sup>9</sup> Psychic stresses, from this point of view, are not individual idiosyncrasies but culturally-induced modes of adjustment.

**Adjustments to Conflicting Norms.** If divergent norms are responsible for inner disharmonies, then one way of maintaining a more stable personality is by conforming to the demands of the group. This is the way of the majority of people in every society, and the process is facilitated by the group itself by various means.

*A latitude of permissive behavior.* No culture is absolutely inflexible. In every society we find some tolerance for deviance, some exceptions to binding rules, some forms of release, if only on special occasions. As in our own society so in others theory and practice are not always congruent. Thus, although in theory all members of a Zuñi household should live amicably together, there are many cases of conflict.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes the conflicts are settled without show of violence; at other times, violence may be the only way out. Benedict relates an interesting case of conflict without violence among the mild and peaceful Zuñi. She writes:

One summer a family I knew well had given me a house to live in, and because of some complicated circumstances another family claimed the right to dispose of the dwelling. When feeling was at its height, Quatsia, the owner of the house, and her husband were with me in the living-room when a man I did not know began cutting down the flowering weeds that had not yet been hoed out of the yard. Keeping the yard free of growth is a chief prerogative of a house-owner, and therefore the man who claimed the right to dispose of the house was taking this occasion to put his claim publicly upon record. He did not enter the house or challenge Quatsia and Leo, who were inside, but he hacked slowly at the weeds. Inside, Leo sat immobile on his heels against the wall, peaceably chewing a leaf. Quatsia, however, allowed herself to flush. "It is an insult," she said to me. "The man out there knows that Leo is serving as priest this year and he can't be angry. He shames us before the whole village by taking care of our yard." The interloper finally raked up his wilted weeds, looked proudly at the neat yard, and went home. No words were ever spoken between them. For Zuñi it was an

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Reinhardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>10</sup> I. Goldman, "The Zuñi Indians of New Mexico," in M. Mead, ed., *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), p. 324.



insult of sorts, and by his morning's work on the yard the rival claimant sufficiently expressed his protest. He pressed the matter no further.<sup>11</sup>

In case of marital infidelity Zuñi wives are permitted a more direct and active retaliation than is sanctioned for the husbands. Thus, as Benedict reports, a wife "may fall upon her rival and beat her up publicly." They call each other unflattering names and give each other black eyes. It is the only sanctioned fist-fight in Zuñi.<sup>12</sup> While this technique settles nothing, the psychological release which it affords must be considerable. It is the psychological release from tension induced by divergent norms—in this case the conflict between peacefulness and aggression—that concerns us here.

An interesting example of behavior unintegrated with the culture yet sanctioned by it, is the case of the *independents* in Manus society on the south coast of the Great Admiralty Island. In Manus there are three personality types: the *leaders*, who deal with other people in aggressive and initiating terms; the *dependents*, who are generally irresponsible persons; and the *independents*, who are in most things nonconformists.<sup>13</sup> There is strong emphasis on respect for property, success, and efficiency, while clumsiness and stupidity are roundly condemned. It is most important that a man assume the economic responsibility of marriage, and this involves a considerable collection of property for the marriage exchange made to a financial backer. "It is shameful to enjoy a wife until a man has paid his backers for her."<sup>14</sup>

But the independents are nonconformists and play a very minor part in the involved system of exchange which dominates the society. Thus, one independent, as described by Mead, paid little attention to anyone. He was never seen without a tool or an implement in his hand. Another one spent most of his time tracing the ramifications of his genealogy. His economic life was irregular, he was usually in arrears in paying his debts, and co-operated with no one. Despite constant public criticism he did nothing about his independent behavior. Independents are in society but not of it —passive spectators of an energetic Manus life.<sup>15</sup>

Permissive behavior is by no means confined to nonliterate culture. In view of the rapidity of change and the variety of cultural norms which

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<sup>11</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, pp. 106–107. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>13</sup> M. Mead, "The Manus of the Admiralty Islands," in Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–229.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.



characterize American life, one would logically expect even greater permissiveness in our behavior. Whether there is or not cannot be easily demonstrated, although all in all American culture seems to display less tolerance toward deviant behavior than is true of many nonliterate people. Americans find release most commonly in forms of behavior which are not expressly permitted but which are accepted by denial. Thus, while sexual variety and amorous adventurousness is ordinarily condemned, if it is pursued at Saturday-night cocktail parties in the homes of friends it is accepted as an exciting diversion. A man may "make love" to another man's wife while other couples are carrying on in like manner. They are all "good sports" about it—although they may quarrel over their escapades when they return home.

The practices of "necking" and "dating" are particularly illustrative of permissive behavior in America. This form of behavior is so common here that outside spectators of the American scene describe it as idiosyncratic to Americans.<sup>16</sup> It has all the earmarks of sexual adventure without, in most cases, its substance. This is especially true of the "heavy date." Here the intimacies, caresses, and exploratory activities are intensified, even though they are "against the mores." Usually the intimacies increase with each successive "date" with the same person, "up to the threshold of, but seldom including, actual intercourse."<sup>17</sup>

Particularly reassuring to the demands of conformity and at the same time promising a latitude of permissiveness is the "double date." In this relationship there is the certainty of making love in "public," for there are always two others present to give the affair an air of conventional respectability. A still further complication, as Gorer points out, is the "blind date." This adds excitement without any risk. Indeed, it may be so "refined" that it can take place over a public radio network, where it takes on a kind of "collective sublimation," inoffensive even to the proverbial old maid. Gorer describes the following instance in which this form of dating was exploited in a program called "Blind Date." He writes:

Pairs of young service men, chosen from the audience, had to compete over the telephone for the favors of invisible models, the model making her choice on the basis of a couple of minutes' telephone conversation, herself saying just enough to keep the conversation going. The winners spent an evening together at the Stork Club at the sponsors' expense; they were provided with corsages to give

<sup>16</sup> See G. Gorer, *The American People: A Study in National Character* (New York: Norton, 1948), chap. iv.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.



their partners and a little cash. The exhibitionist fervor with which the competitors put over their "lines," with a considerable part of the United States listening in, was extremely revealing.<sup>18</sup>

Permissiveness varies widely, of course, both as to range and kind. We have already called attention to the attitude toward the practice of masturbation in our culture. This attitude is much more characteristic of European and American society than of most literate cultures. The Japanese are probably most permissive in this matter. Japanese children are never taught that masturbation is evil, and the adult cannot fathom the Western attitude regarding it. The Japanese assign to masturbation a minor, but desirable, place in a decorous life.<sup>19</sup> This is in complete conformity with their view that human feeling, whether in the form of sex pleasures or alcoholic drinks, is thoroughly good in its minor place in life. In contrast to the surreptitious behavior of Americans regarding sexual relations, especially out of wedlock, the Japanese are completely honest. If a Japanese is too poor to keep a mistress he can always visit a *geisha* or a prostitute. Indeed, as Benedict points out, a man's wife "may dress and prepare him for his evening of relaxation."<sup>20</sup>

The same "non-moral" attitude applies to homosexual practices in Japan. Although as a result of Western influence homosexuality has been made illegal, it does not receive moralistic condemnation. Like all other pleasures, it is acceptable when given a minor place in the pattern of life. When it is kept in its proper place and does not interfere with carrying on the family, it is accepted. Homosexuality is shocking to the Japanese only when it is practiced passively. Accordingly, men seek out boy partners, for adults, as Benedict points out, consider the passive role to be beneath their dignity. The Japanese, she adds, draw their own lines as to what is and what is not self-respecting, although these lines are different from our own.<sup>21</sup>

The latitude of permissive behavior practiced in other cultures suggests that there is need for greater tolerance in our own culture for "deviant" attitudes and behavior and more acceptance of the less "normal" individuals. There is something neurotic about our culture when it exhibits the exaggerated fear of deviation from its more or less arbitrary standards.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

<sup>19</sup> R. Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), p. 188.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.



Cultural norms can be as "neurotic" as the victims of its repressive demands. There is no evidence, furthermore, to show that societies in which a considerable latitude of permissive behavior exists are the worse for it. On the contrary, anthropological data viewed psychologically suggests that such tolerance is conducive to tension reduction and thus eventually perhaps to a prevention of mental disorder.

*Cultural rationalizations.* We have already employed the term *rationalization* to describe the mode of adjustment whereby an individual gives emotionally satisfying instead of correct reasons for his behavior. Cultural rationalizations are explanations given by the culture, or more usually the subculture or reference group, to adjust its members to conflicting norms. The best examples of this form of adjustment furnished by society are found in the area of economic activity. Thus, vested interests in the United States have, despite their predatoriness, condoned and justified their conduct by such slogans as "social welfare" and "service." More than that, they have succeeded in obtaining society's sanctions, so that most people today defend the activities of these vested interests even though they have suffered as exploited victims. These vested interests arrange the relationships between themselves and the workers in such a manner as to be most advantageous to themselves even at the cost of unemployment and poverty for the workers. Nevertheless, as a number of writers have pointed out, the rationalizations of the vested interests have become so firmly established as norms in the social framework that a world-wide depression and unprecedented unemployment have scarcely affected the unemployed individual's attitude toward them.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, so completely rationalized has this behavior become in America that acquisitiveness has become a norm in terms of which achievement is evaluated. At no place and at no time in history has the businessman or industrialist possessed the prestige and the power that he enjoys in the United States.<sup>23</sup> He is a "booster," and is almost invariably hostile to labor-union movements, which he considers un-American. He views trade-unionism and criticisms of business enterprise as attacks on "Americanism." As Laski points out, the American businessman does not hesitate to use violence against men who go on strike; nor does he hesitate in describing the striker as the embodiment of violence and a menace to established government.<sup>24</sup> This rationalization is perpetuated in the schools and colleges of the land and by every device of modern propa-

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Reinhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

<sup>23</sup> H. J. Laski, *The American Democracy* (New York: Viking, 1948), p. 165.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.



ganda. In this way the "ethics" of the businessman can be pursued without too great a strain on his moral conscience.

In this respect the modern businessman has achieved a far more effective way of dealing with the tensions produced by divergent norms than the ordinary individual, who can indulge only in a limited area of permissive behavior. The businessman has succeeded in equating acquisition with justice. As long as he continues in this success, the psychological burdens stemming from the contradictions of his creed will probably leave him untouched. As soon as he begins to suspect that there is a disparity between his creed and the world to which he is trying to apply it—and there is evidence that the suspicion has begun to trouble him—his psychological tensions will inevitably mount. He will be haunted by the fear that when he makes the transition from the myth of his moral righteousness to the acceptance of the hard economic realities, "he may have lost the power to control his own destiny."<sup>25</sup>

The plight of the modern businessman is not, however, his alone. It pervades the whole of contemporary Western civilization. The norms or values toward which contemporary man is trying to adjust himself are fundamentally "paranoic." They are contradictory to each other and at variance with the social logic of modern life. This is seen most clearly in the disparity between equalitarianism in politics and inequality of opportunity in economic affairs.

If, now, the personality is a more or less organized whole, it cannot escape the psychological consequences of an atomized and contradictory set of cultural norms: strain, hostility, insecurity, fear, aggressiveness, etc. To attempt, therefore, to resolve the psychological conflicts of modern man, as Reinhardt remarks, by adding a wing to the state hospital is about as realistic and effective as earlier attempts to prevent typhoid fever in the Arkansas lowlands by giving pills to patients.<sup>26</sup>

### Cultural Norms in Some Areas of Behavior

Our discussion thus far has attempted to show that (1) normality is defined by cultural norms, and (2) cultural standards mold the individual and direct his behavior. We wish, next, to examine specific areas of behavior with a view to showing the extent to which they are conditioned by the cultural norms of a group. While our purpose is to

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> Reinhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 260.



show that a close relationship exists between cultural norms and psychological behavior, the relationship is bound to be only partial. Cultures, like the personalities which they mold, are always psychologically plastic. We shall direct our attention to the following areas of behavior: cooperation, competition, aggression, and sex-temperament.

**Cooperation.** Cooperative behavior, like any form of culturally-induced conduct, is conditioned by the dominant values of the total culture. An individual who is said to be cooperative responds to a culturally determined goal, not to a culturally unstructured situation. Cooperation is a value of a society, and the cooperative individual responds to the norms which operate in his culture. It is not an inherent trait of his nature, but a mode of behavior imposed upon him by the social emphasis of his culture.

In stating the matter this way, however, it should be pointed out that such traits as cooperation, competition, and the like are not abstractions hovering above the individual as spurs to his actions. They are words to describe forms of behavior or of existence which are highly valued, such as individual security or orderliness in the case of cooperation, and the value of property for self-enhancement or the importance of social climbing in the case of competition.

Again, it is important to distinguish, as Margaret Mead does, between *competition* and *rivalry*, and between *cooperation* and *helpfulness*.<sup>27</sup> In competition the goal is the center of orientation and the competitor is of minor consequence. In rivalry the competitor who must be bested is the focus of orientation and the goal toward which each strives is of secondary importance. In cooperation the goal is shared by all in common, whereas in helpfulness the goal is shared only indirectly through relationship of the helper to the seeker.

**The Arapesh.** The Arapesh live in New Guinea. They are cooperative through person-to-person helpfulness. They are an agricultural people whose basic values are helpfulness and kindness. Practically everything, particularly food, is readily shared. Children are loved and treated affectionately not only by their parents but by every member of the community. Leadership is something that men engage in only because it is a responsibility imposed upon them, not for any power or privilege accruing from it. Prestige is most commonly valued in a competitive society where it is possible to rise in status; in a society like that of the Arapesh it has no value and men do not seek it.

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<sup>27</sup> M. Mead, "Introduction," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 17.



The norms of the society and their relation to the personality of the Arapesh are most clearly discernible in their view of the "ideal personality." The ideal man, Mead points out, is one who is devoted to community welfare, willing to lead despite the low valuation of leadership and self-assertion, wise, gentle, and unaggressive. While the society permits the pursuit of individual ends, it has no special rewards for them.<sup>28</sup>

Although leadership must inevitably be assumed by some of its members, there is no competition between leaders, for they do not rank in a hierarchy of power and status. There is no standard measuring rod, in other words, by means of which men in the same community may compare themselves. There is only one area of their daily life in which rivalry is sanctioned, namely, between men of different localities who had once opposed each other in a trivial fight. They publicly declare themselves to be rivals and the announcement soon reaches the opponent in the other locality. Henceforth, although they never meet each other again, each person strives to "surpass" the other in food-growing, hunting, pig-raising, etc. This rivalry, Mead points out, is "a refuge for those who, in spite of the training which their culture has given them, are still competitive and likely to see insult in another's triumph."<sup>29</sup>

What social-psychological conclusions may one draw from the foregoing data? Mead's statement in the last quotation is significant. It shows that despite the disapproval of competitive relationships rivalries still exist. Arapesh, like every society, must make room for its deviants and nonconformists. Here as elsewhere there are individuals who, despite an affectionate socialization and a uniform emphasis on serenity and passivity, are nonetheless angry and aggressive. Uniformity of behavior and integration of personality are always relative; they constitute an ideal and a myth. To the extent that rivalry with an outsider is sanctioned, psychological tensions can be reduced. But such rivalry is capable of channelizing only a small amount of aggression, and for most people in Arapesh society life must be burdened with anxieties and tensions. This is seen in the cultural sanctioning of sorcery against people with whom they are angry. It is seen in the frequent quarrels, especially over trespassing pigs, which men engage in with their neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

These conflicts arise, of course, because of the subtle operation of standards that are not always consistent. Probably no group is wholly untouched

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<sup>28</sup> M. Mead, "The Arapesh of New Guinea," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.



by the values and practices of a neighboring people, and norms are bound to interpenetrate and thereby cause confusions which lead to psychological wear and tear. Thus, while the Arapesh society is essentially cooperative, obtaining a great amount of psychological support and stability in mutual helpfulness, neither the culture nor the personality which it molds are wholly free of the differences, conflicts, and hostilities which the norms of a society tend to beget. Again, since security in Arapesh is obtained from close identification with and dependence on the group, the self is poorly developed, and when the dependent relationship is disturbed, as happens frequently, the personality is bound to suffer. It is not fortified, because of its very weakness, to deal with disruptions in human relationships, such as the withdrawal of help and affection from the recalcitrant individual by the whole community.

*The Maori.* The Maori of New Zealand contrast interestingly with the Arapesh. While both are basically cooperative societies, the Maori provide more opportunity for individual initiative. Although the system of property relations in Maori is not entirely clear, the very uncertainty in the matter suggests the absence of emphasis on individual rights.<sup>31</sup> Each tribe has jurisdiction over a particular area. Although all the people cooperate in the agricultural production of the village, each household owns and cultivates its own field. The chief, although occupying a position of prominence, is merely the executor, not the owner, of the storehouse of communal goods. His is the prerogative of taking the initiative in cooperative undertakings, but his power is never absolute, even in war, and people can refuse to give him aid or follow his command.<sup>32</sup>

The ideal of Maori behavior is to work for the welfare of others by providing food for them, giving property to them, and promoting peace and good will among them. But there is always a high degree of personal reward in this cooperation. Social recognition is achieved in generosity toward others. Individual achievement is psychologically shared by all, so that excellence in any particular skill is acclaimed by the entire group. Rivalry is stimulated when it involves the welfare of the group. Thus, in fishing crews rivalry is stimulated by the great honor received in catching the first fish. Persons compete, not for their own aggrandizement, but for serving the community. As Mishkin points out, the fact that a particular fishing crew caught most sharks did not mean that they would have more

<sup>31</sup> B. Mishkin, "The Maori of New Zealand," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 431.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.



to eat, nor was there the stigma of disgrace attached to those who did not make the first catch.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Maori society provides for an effective latitude of permissive behavior. When conformity becomes too boring or too oppressive, the individual can exercise his right to be unconventional. Notoriety is not condemned. Young people might show off by violating some taboos—even though a violation of the magical controls normally carries severe punishment. Thus, they might on occasion trespass tabooed ground, steal tabooed articles, etc. These are pranks enjoyed by the members of the whole community and, as Mishkin shows, are looked upon by the older people as practical training for dealing with enemy tribes.<sup>34</sup>

**Competition.** Competition may express itself either in a passionate pursuit of a personal goal or in marked individualism, i.e., strong independence from social conventions and controls. Like cooperation, it is a product of cultural norms and social experiences. It should be added that, like cooperation, competition is not necessarily the only form of interpersonal relationships within a single society. People are considered competitive when competition is the dominant, but not necessarily the exclusive, tenor of its way of life. Obviously social life would be impossible without some cooperation. At the same time every society we have thus far examined shows traces, however tangential and deflected, of competitive or individualistic behavior in some phase of life. Even the Zuñis, who are notably cooperative, permit, as we saw, *recognition* to individuals for their refusal to strive or to become distinctive.

*The Ifugao.* The Ifugao are a brown-skinned Malaysian people who inhabit the interior of Northern Luzon, in the Philippine Islands. The culture places a high premium on individualism. This individualism characterizes each family as a unit. The family pursues its individualistic ends of accumulating large stores of rice even at the cost of impoverishing other sections of the community.<sup>35</sup> Limited cooperation exists beyond the family only in case of severe drought, when neighbors will help with the task of irrigation. Ifugao may be described loosely as a "capitalistic" society, in that profit in the form of economic goods goes to capital rather than to labor. Laborers in the rice fields, Goldman points out, are paid a small fixed sum (ten men getting a single breechclout among them for ten days' work), while the bulk of the rice goes to the landowner.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 453.

<sup>35</sup> I. Goldman, "The Ifugao of the Philippine Islands," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.



Inasmuch as property is held in high esteem, rewards go only to those who possess it. Economic relations are competitive, family being pitted against family in almost every department of social behavior. Men in this society are, accordingly, motivated by the need to accumulate wealth in the form of property and the prestige and power that derive from it. Since property always goes to the most shrewd and aggressive individual, the Ifugao is extremely competitive and hostile in his relations with others, even to the extent of depriving or ruining his neighbors by ruse, trickery, or intimidation. His aggressiveness finds additional sanctioned outlet through pride and vengeance toward his debtor or creditor. This description holds largely for members of the landowning class, for in the landless class the opportunity for competitive and aggressive behavior is greatly restricted.

The absence of competitiveness and the practice of cooperation exist only in relation to near kin. The Ifugao individual, therefore, is characterized by a duality of attitudes and habits. Toward members of his family and other kinsmen he must be cooperative, or at least noncompetitive. Toward others he must be competitive. It is interesting to note that his cooperative family relations make competitive behavior toward others more successful, for he can compete with others as an entire family unit.<sup>37</sup>

As might be expected under such cultural circumstances, the Ifugao develops a strong self or ego. He obtains psychological security from kin-group solidarity and from confidence in himself. This security is increased, of course, by the possession of property and by hostility toward others. Violent behavior is, accordingly, quite common. In the economically poor segments of the culture, compensation takes the form of reckless behavior which constitutes a problem and a threat to the upper classes.

*The Kwakiutl.* The Kwakiutl Indians inhabit a section of Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia. These people live mostly by fishing and on wild berries and small clover gardens. By "primitive" standards their economic life is one of abundance. Their behavior is competitive in the extreme—a kind of parody of our own society.<sup>38</sup>

The competitive behavior of the Kwakiutl stems principally from the concept of rank. Rank carries prestige, and prestige he will gain at any price. Rank is achieved by means of the distribution or destruction of property, especially at ceremonial feasts known as *potlatches* during which large quantities of possessions are destroyed.<sup>39</sup> While the possession of ma-

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>38</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. x.

<sup>39</sup> Our description of Kwakiutl follows R. Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*, chap. vi, and I. Goldman, "The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, chap. vi.



terial things is important, more highly prized yet are immaterial possessions, such as names, songs, myths, and privileges. Possessions as such, however, are not important, but the *prerogatives* which they give to one individual over others are the supreme values. Of these prerogatives the nobility titles have the greatest value. These titles are obtained through the distribution of blankets, coppers, boxes, etc., and the giving of ceremonial feasts at which valuables are destroyed. The main function of these activities is to humiliate rivals. With each successful potlatch a man obtains more prestige as well as more property with which to conduct even greater potlatches. These ceremonies are fiercely competitive bouts in which one individual tries to crush the prestige of another.<sup>40</sup> The fear of humiliation is so great that men are not uncommonly driven to commit suicide.

The Kwakiutl, since he places great store by titles and prerogatives, develops a strong ego. Indeed, proof of the strength of the ego lies in the ability to tolerate the dissipation and destruction of property.<sup>41</sup> So great is the need for status and prestige, for individuality and superiority, that any insult or affront is unbearable. Even accidents are occasions for shame, and death is the greatest of all insults. This supreme insult is wiped out by distribution and destruction of property. The most extreme way of meeting the shame of death is by head-hunting, by killing a member of another group. Putting another to death to mourn for the death of one's own is not, as Benedict points out, an act of retaliation upon another group for killing one's relative. On the contrary, the relative may have died of a disease or by the hand of an enemy. But someone in the group must wipe out the shame of the death of the beloved. Hence, the bereaved person may simply go to the house of a neighboring chief, announce in formal fashion that his own kin has died, inform him that he, the neighbor, must die also, and proceed to kill him. This act is considered noble, for it means that the bereaved has not been humiliated, but has struck back. "Death, like all the other untoward accidents of existence, confounded man's pride and could only be handled in terms of shame."<sup>42</sup>

Thus, although the self in Kwakiutl society is highly developed, the tensions of the competitive life make for a low degree of security, for the individual fluctuates between self-glorification and the constant fear of shame and humiliation. It should be added, however, that his low sense of security is mollified to some degree by the highly individualistic and com-

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<sup>40</sup> I. Goldman, "The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island," p. 188.

<sup>41</sup> M. Mead, "Interpretive Statement," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>42</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 216.



petitive striving within the group, and by the status which he can achieve thereby.

These different ways of life point out once again the cultural determination of human behavior. Man everywhere acts in accordance with the cultural norms of his group. The popular and fallacious dogma that man is inherently competitive, and the less popular but equally false belief that he is by nature cooperative, do not stand the test of ethnological research.

**Aggression.** The diversity of cultural standards regarding aggression is almost endless. Aggression, like cooperation and competition, is socially conditioned and therefore varies with the cultural norms which do or do not institutionalize it. War, homicide, suicide, and similar forms of aggressive behavior, ethnologists have found, vary remarkably throughout the world. There are societies which find these forms of behavior incomprehensible, and many do not even have words in their language to denote them. We have already touched upon some forms of aggression, such as the Kwakiutl who kills in order to compensate for humiliation or shame. We shall now examine aggression in the Ojibwa and Zuñi peoples.

*The Ojibwa of Canada.*<sup>43</sup> Fear of being shamed is very strong in Ojibwa, and accordingly much of the violence that exists is by way of repudiation of insults. Outright murder is not common, but slashings seem to be more frequent. The most common form of expression for interpersonal hostility is through shamanism, by invoking bad medicine omens, starvation, and attacks of paralysis. Murder is most commonly committed for trespass upon trapping grounds. It is avenged by a close relative of the deceased.

War parties are a very important form of aggression. These parties are not provoked by an enemy or outsider, but by a member of the group who has a vision of success on the warpath. This person sends out invitations to the men of the village for a "smoker" in his wigwam. At this meeting he tells them of his vision, and if the others trust him they volunteer to train for war for the next year. The warfare is not organized, and each warrior fights for himself. Those who do well acquire feathers, and the bravest is sometimes presented with a virgin bride. The individual who has successfully led a war party gains a reputation and has a better opportunity for organizing a future war party.

<sup>43</sup> In describing the Ojibwa we rely on the following source: Ruth Landes, "The Ojibwa of Canada," in M. Mead, *op. cit.*, chap. iii.



Suicide is institutionalized and is most often committed to wipe out shame or disgrace.

*The Zuñi.* This society contrasts sharply with the Ojibwa or any other society which permits a free expression of hostility and aggression. Even the crimes which are committed in this society are basically nonviolent. There are only two crimes: witchcraft and revealing to an uninitiated boy the secrets of the masked gods. Benedict reports that only one case of homicide was remembered by the people, and it was settled by payments between the two families.<sup>44</sup>

Self-torture is not understood. The Zuñis have no scars on their bodies which might indicate self-inflicted pain. Even the ceremonial whipping, as we pointed out earlier, is not punitive, but a rite of exorcism.

Suicide is entirely nonexistent. The Zuñis, indeed, have no idea of what it could be. The only approximation that they could cite—and by way of a story only—is the case of a man who said that he would like to die with a beautiful woman. One day he went to cure a sick woman, and his medicine required that he chew a wild medicinal plant, which killed him. But this, be it noted, is only the story of a man whose death occurred in the form he was overheard to wish for.<sup>45</sup>

**Sex-temperament.** The view that there are sharp innate temperamental differences between men and women is widespread. Ordinarily men are conceived to be aggressive and dominant and women are thought to be delicate and submissive. Likewise, when we find persons in our society who display in their behavior traits of the opposite sex, we tend to look upon them as deviants or as abnormal. Thanks to the researches of cultural anthropologists, however, we have learned that the differences between men and women, like so many other features of human behavior, are markedly determined by the dominant norms of a culture. Margaret Mead, who has done some of the best work on the place of cultural norms in shaping human personality, has made the student of human nature much more sophisticated in his study of temperamental differences between the sexes. We must take careful note of her observation regarding the expectation of simple differences. She writes:

In expecting simple reversals—that if an aspect of social life is not specifically sacred, it must be specifically secular; that if men are strong, women must be weak—we ignore the fact that cultures exercise far greater license than this in selecting the possible aspects of human life which they will minimize, overempha-

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<sup>44</sup> Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 100.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.



size, or ignore. And while every culture has in some way institutionalized the roles of men and women, it has not necessarily been in terms of contrast between the prescribed personalities of the two sexes, nor in terms of dominance or submission.<sup>46</sup>

The studies of Margaret Mead show that sex-temperament differentials are not inherent characteristics but are modes of behavior congruent with the set of cultural values which predominate in a group. In her book *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, she describes the sex-temperament of the Arapesh, the Mundugumor, and the Tchambuli societies, and relates it to the cultural norms of these groups.

*The Arapesh.* As we pointed out in our discussion of cooperation, the Arapesh are a gentle, unaggressive tribe. They value mildness and responsiveness in both sexes. The emphasis is not on differentiation of the sexes but on the development of a single human type. This single type must have a mild and loving attitude toward life.

The molding of a gentle temperament begins at the time of conception. From the time that a woman is known to be pregnant, a gentle environment is created for both the prospective mother and the unborn infant. intercourse now ceases, for the child must sleep undisturbed in its mother's womb. After the infant is born, the father lies down tenderly with his wife and watches gently over the child. The lives of all three are gently intertwined. The child receives tender care; he is never far from the comforting arms of his parents or neighbors. "A child crying is a tragedy to be avoided at any cost, and this attitude is carried over into later life."<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, as Mead points out, a child is suckled whenever it cries, either by the mother or by another woman who can give him the breast, he sleeps in close contact with the mother's body, and experiences a continuous warm sensation of security.

No differentials of behavior, except a slight acknowledgment of age difference, is forced upon the growing child. Thus, a child is expected to run an errand for his grandfather a trifle faster than one for his father. The separation of the sexes in childhood, and an unwholesome awareness of their difference, are foreign to the Arapesh children. They do not wear clothes until they are four or five years old, and they are not expected to behave differently toward children of the opposite sex from the way they behave toward those of their own sex.

<sup>46</sup> M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (New York: Morrow, 1935), p. xi. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.



The relations of children to parents, although very close, are not dependent. Children are "lent about," as Mead points out. Thus, a visiting aunt when preparing to return to her home will take a child with her, hand him on to some other relative, who will eventually return him to his home. This means, as Mead puts it, that "a child learns to think of the world as filled with parents," not merely as a place in which all safety depends upon his own parents. Out of these relationships the child develops the affectional responsiveness which characterizes most Arapesh adults.

Aggression toward others has no opportunity to develop. When children in play quarrel or fight, adults step in immediately. The angry child is never permitted to give vent to his anger by aggression toward others. He may have temper tantrums, roll in the mud, throw stones on the ground, but he is not permitted to touch another child in anger. This habit persists through life. Thus, as Mead points out, a man in anger may spend an hour hitting an object, or hacking with an ax at one of his own palm trees. The purpose in this training is not to control the child's emotions, but to prevent their expression from harming anyone besides himself.

Boys and girls thus grow up without too sharp an awareness of sex differences, and as adults they both display roughly the same characteristics. Standardized personality differences between men and women are largely nonexistent. The Arapesh demonstrate that differences in sex-temperament are determined largely by the cultural norms with which members of a society are expected to conform.

*The Mundugumor.* The Mundugumor, like the Arapesh and the Tchambuli, live on the Island of New Guinea. Like the Arapesh, they emphasize a single human type, rather than different attitudes for one specific sex. Outside this general similarity, however, the life and the personality of the Mundugumor differ greatly from those of the Arapesh. In contrast to the gentle and responsive Arapesh, the Mundugumor man and woman are violent and vengeful. Instead of a feeling of joy at the prospect of the birth of a child, and the anticipation of working together to love and protect him, the Mundugumor man and wife feel resentment. Hostility is pronounced between husband and wife, and this attitude is carried over into parent-child relationships.

The struggle between husband and wife over the child begins before the latter's birth. In the first place, when his wife is pregnant, the husband is a "marked man." He suffers from various taboos which separate him from his fellows and aggravate his annoyance with his wife. He hates his child even before it is born, for it is responsible for cessation of intercourse with his wife. The pregnant woman is hostile toward her husband for his sexual



deprivation and his anger and is in perpetual fear that he will, as is likely to be the case, desert her for another wife. They argue over the question of whether the child at birth shall be saved or not, the father preferring to save a girl, the mother a boy. The mother has little prospect of winning in this choice, for her father and brothers also prefer a girl. The motivations that impel husband and wife during pregnancy all conspire against the preservation of the child. Fortunately these impulses are not always followed and the reproduction of Mundugumor society is therefore assured.

The aggressive, violent, and vengeful attitudes of the adults are quite naturally transmitted to the child. The infant receives poor maternal care. Even the basket in which he lies is stiff and uncomfortable and permits no warm bodily contacts with the mother. His feeding is short and hurried. The moment he stops sucking to catch his breath he is returned to his stiff bed. There is no fondling by the mother, no pleasure in warm contact with the mother's breast. He accordingly develops a pugnacious attitude, holding desperately on to the nipple, and sucking vigorously. If he chokes from swallowing too fast, as happens frequently, the mother becomes angry and the infant becomes upset. All this aggravates an already unpleasant struggle between the mother and the infant.

As he grows older the same aggressive pattern is at work. From childhood on, both sexes resent and combat interference, and their resentment of their parents becomes progressively more intense. The society is so organized that "men fight about women, and women elude, defy, and complicate this fighting to the limit of their abilities. So little girls grow up as aggressive as little boys and with no expectation of docilely accepting their role in life."<sup>48</sup>

In Mundugumor, thus, both men and women are expected by the prevailing norms of the society to be competitive, jealous, aggressively sexed, and violent. This is in sharp contrast to the sex-temperament of the Arapesh, who have almost no meaningful place for aggressive men and women.

Deviants there are, however, in every society, as we have frequently shown. A recalcitrant and violent Arapesh, having no institutionalized place in his society, must nonetheless be tolerated, although he is likely destined to suffer neurotic conflict with his society. In Mundugumor there are deviants, too: mild-mannered men who show affection for their sons and gentle women who like to cuddle their babies in their arms. They are accepted, but their place is the place of the misfits. There are, however,

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.



two courses, according to Mead, open to these deviants, namely, day-dreaming or the circumvention of the cultural norms themselves. The first is, of course, the most common outlet; the second is quite rare. Mead describes one gentle and cooperative man who tried the second method. He studied his society carefully and discovered every loophole through which his fine intelligence could outmatch others' brute strength. In this way he was able to marry and have a large household of women and children, even though this is usually denied to a deviant as a consequence of his social unfitness.

In a similar way Mead describes a deviant Mundugumor woman whose "abnormality" lay in the fact that she loved children. She refused to destroy her first child, an act which enraged her husband and caused him to leave her for another woman. She adopted one of a pair of her sister's twins whom she suckled long and tenderly. Mead reports that this twin always had a happy smile on its face in contrast to the other twin who was suckled by its own mother, and who always had a harsh set frown on its face. This deviance, of course, entailed a price, the price of ostracism and widowhood, but it fulfilled the woman's need to show affection and to love children.

*The Tchambuli.* These people may be said to live principally for art. "Every man is an artist and most men are skilled not in some one art alone but in many: dancing, carving, plaiting, painting, and so on."<sup>49</sup> Women, too, are interested in art, but it is confined to "sharing in the graceful pattern of social relations," some painting of baskets, and chorus dancing.

In Tchambuli the sex-temperament, viewed from the norms of our own society, is reversed. Man is "feminine" whereas woman is "masculine." The Tchambuli male wears delicately arranged curls, has a mincing step and self-conscious mien, and has a strong sense of himself as an actor, playing a series of charming parts.<sup>50</sup> He is high-strung and sensitive and finds it hard to relax with other men, but his relations with women are stable and satisfying.

The child's socialization is the source of his later traits. He is never left alone. His mother holds him lightly in her arms while she makes rain capes or sleeping baskets. The whole task of holding the child and working at the same time is done in a casual and nonchalant manner, and he is nursed generously but in the same casual way.

The women work in groups, cook together for a feast, and carry on with their daily round of activities in a comradely, efficient, and happy way.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.



In a group of men, however, there is always strain, guardedness, cattiness, and innuendo—very much as women are thought to be in our own society. Mead's description of Walinakwon, a Tchambuli man, points out the temperament of the Tchambuli male:

Walinakwon was beautiful, a graceful dancer, a fluent speaker, proud, imperious, but withal soft-spoken, and resourceful. In addition to his first wife, who had been given him as a child by his mother's clan, two other women had chosen him as a husband. He was a fortunate man. All three of his wives could plait mosquito-bags, and Walinakwon was therefore in a fair way to become a rich man.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the exalted position of the male, however, it is the women in Tchambuli who have the real "male" prerogatives. They have the position of power in the community. They do most of the important work, such as gardening and fishing, while the men pursue their aesthetic interests. A woman's attitude toward men is one of "kindly tolerance and appreciation." The minor irritations and conflicts that go on among the men in their sensitive relations with one another, which are full of outrages and hurt feelings, are assuaged by the women.

The relations of the sexes, and the resulting temperamental make-up of each, are contradictory. Men are, Mead points out, theoretically and legally dominant; yet "they play an emotionally subservient role, dependent upon the security given them by women, and even in sex-activity looking to women to give the leads."<sup>52</sup> The men are perpetually concerned with women's opinion of them, each one standing alone and uncertain in his relations with other men; whereas "the women are a solid group, confused by no rivalries, brisk, patronizing, and jovial." They are the dominant individuals; they feed their husbands and lovers upon "doled-out pellets of love."<sup>53</sup>

The cultures of the Arapesh, Mundugumor, and Tchambuli point to the conclusion that sex-temperament, like other human traits, is culturally produced. This conclusion makes us aware of the change in the sex-temperament of Americans. As Mead points out, we have, unwittingly of course, partially reversed the European tradition of male dominance and are producing "a generation of women who model their lives on the pattern of their school-teachers and their aggressive, directive mothers."<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253. Reprinted by permission of William Morrow & Company, Inc.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310. See also M. Mead, *Male and Female* (New York: Morrow, 1949).



Contemporary American norms no longer consider an aggressive woman as a deviant from the fragile female of a half-century ago, for the timid woman is no longer a symbol of American womanhood. This change has brought with it, of course, serious adjustment problems for both men and women in our society, which lie at the basis of many conflicts and maladjustments.

### Role-status and Personality

Cultural norms direct an individual's behavior to a great extent through the roles that he must play and the status which he holds in his group. Men or women are "masculine" or "feminine" to the extent that they act the part and assume the place which society expects of or ascribes to them. The social role which an individual is expected to assume and the place which society assigns to him in the group may be called *role-status*, for the two forms of social expectancies are actually inseparable. Thus, every society makes such common distinctions, however unobtrusively, as those of age, sex, vocation, etc. These role-statuses are inextricably tied up with the attitudes and behavior of the individual, and therefore make up an important aspect of the total personality.<sup>55</sup>

**Social Role.** We have had many occasions in this book to speak of role-acting and its place in human behavior. Through role-acting personality is formed, and through role-acting we can predict with some assurance of success a person's behavior. A person who plays a certain role acts in accordance with the cultural norms or forms of behavior which are expected of him by virtue of his status in his group. This fact was brought out in our earlier discussion of the "definition of the situation" by the family and by the community. The definition of the situation consists of the set of values or norms of a group which set up certain expected forms of behavior. The "well-adjusted" individual is one who behaves in accordance with the norms or definitions of his cultural group, usually some reference group within the larger social organization. The deviant person is one who does not live up to the roles and expectations of his cultural group.

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<sup>55</sup> The most exhaustive treatment of role and status is found in E. T. Hiller, *Social Relations and Structures—A Study in Principles of Sociology* (New York: Harper, 1947), chaps. xxii–xxxv. See also L. Wilson and W. L. Kolb, *Sociological Analysis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), chap. vii, and R. Linton, *The Study of Man* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1936), chap. viii.



**Social Status.** An individual probably never plays roles merely as such. The roles which he plays are determined to a remarkable extent by the status which is ascribed to him, or the position which he achieves in the social structure of his group. Thus, a child plays the role of a child because his status in his group is that of a child; a woman acts the role of a mother because her position in the organization of the community is that of a bearer and molder of children. Role and status are inseparable.

Hiller identifies three kinds of status. *Ascribed status* refers to the position of an individual which is given to him on the basis of some identifying characteristic, such as age, race, occupation, etc. The status of a doctor, for example, is based upon his profession, the status of a Negro upon his race, and the position of a grandfather upon his seniority. Each occupies a specific place in the group by virtue of some trait which describes him in terms of the relevant cultural norms. *Assumed status* is a position in society which a man may accept or reject. Unlike ascribed status, which is fixed by the definitions of the group, assumed status is controlled by the individual. Thus, to use Hiller's example, a man must be acceptable to someone in order to become a husband, but he is free to assume this status. Being a husband is an assumed status. *Achieved status* is a position which is attained through the possession and practice of some ability, knowledge, or skill. One may become a doctor, a lawyer, a laborer, or a thug, according to one's specific experience or skill in the performance of certain activities.<sup>56</sup>

**Role-status and Personality.** In our discussion of the self we called attention to the great importance of self-esteem in the psychic economy of the individual's attitudes and behavior. Self-esteem is based largely on role-status, on what others think of us and how they treat us. We can hardly exaggerate when we say that there is no more important set of habits in the process of adjustment than those which are involved in a man's attitudes toward himself—his self-image. Much distress and conflict result from an individual's inability to make his self-image congruent with his role-status.<sup>57</sup> We all carry in our heads certain images of ourselves. When these images are not accepted by others, i.e., when the role-status ascribed to us by our group is at variance with our notion of ourselves, tensions or maladjustments may easily result.

Western man in particular is disturbed because of conflicting role-  
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<sup>56</sup> For a discussion of these three forms of status see Hiller, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-338.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. E. R. Guthrie, *The Psychology of Human Conflict* (New York: Harper, 1938), pp. 348-351.



statuses. In primitive societies a man's role-status is usually well-defined, just as the various norms are fairly consistent. Maladjustments arising from conflicting role-statuses are relatively infrequent, for a man usually "knows his place" and accepts it at its face value. In our own society, owing especially to the restructurization of society initiated and sustained by modern industry and technology, man is experiencing an unparalleled individual and social mobility. As a consequence, the ascribed and relatively settled role-status of the past has broken down. Since no status system has yet emerged which adequately synchronizes with the actualities of modern urban-industrial life, man finds himself in uncertain and often conflicting role-situations. He cannot be sure in such circumstances of the choices he makes, nor can he feel confident that the behavior which he expects from others can be predicted by the roles which they play or the position in society which they occupy. Thus we are brought around once more to our earlier observation, namely, that when a basic element in the social framework of values toward which a person is oriented changes, such as a shift in norms or in role-status, the individual becomes confused and distressed, because his life-style is no longer socially adaptive.

## Conclusion

There is a growing tendency in social psychology to recognize the great malleability of human nature and to acknowledge the importance of cultural conditioning in molding personality. Yet Margaret Mead in her new prefatory comments to her early studies of primitive socialization remarks that there still are some students of human behavior who, though acknowledging the wide variety of attitudes and behavior in different societies, "still believe in their heart of hearts that all men, Samoan, Manus, Mundugumor, Eskimo and Bantu, are really made in their own image, with a few non-essential trappings of feathers and cowrie shells to obscure the all-important similarities."<sup>58</sup> The anthropological data which we have presented in this chapter, as well as those cited *passim* in this book, should be sufficient to demonstrate the fallacy of their views.

We have attempted to show in this chapter the molding force of culture in human attitudes and practices. We have demonstrated that characteristics which have for centuries been believed to be inherent and universal are in fact largely determined by the impact of the social heritage upon the growing individual. More precisely we have shown that most adults in every society behave, not in accordance with biological impulses merely, important as these are, but largely in response to the dominant norms or values which constitute the effective mores of the group.

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<sup>58</sup> M. Mead, *From the South Seas* (New York: Morrow, 1939), p. xi.



Our emphasis should not, however, be mistaken for the whole conclusion. The fact that individual differences are universally distributed suggests that there is more than cultural conditioning at work. There may well be some hereditary basis for some of the differences. The fact that there are factors in almost every culture which place a psychological strain upon the individual, making him pay too heavy a price for conformity to the cultural norms, suggests that a culture cannot without evil consequences ignore the biological substructure of man. Cultural relativism has value for social psychology, but there is danger of pressing it too far. This fits well into our social-psychological framework, which posits the existence of biological tendencies as well as cultural conditioning. Judging by the vast accumulation of ethnological evidence, however, the force of heredity plays a minor, not a major, role in the growth of personality.



## CHAPTER 10:

# Ethos and Basic Personality

IN THE PRECEDING two chapters we presented ethnological data to show that personality is to a large extent a product of cultural conditioning. We emphasized that the great variety of human attitudes and actions is the result of differences in the dominant social values and cultural forms. In the present chapter we shall continue descriptions of different cultures, but we shall now emphasize the uniformities in the behavior of modern peoples. We shall consider the "modal personality" of a culture, the personality structure corresponding to the *essential* culture of a group. The existence of universal behavior characteristics for each society has already been noted. Thus, most of the Arapesh are trusting, gentle, and cooperative because these characteristics are stamped into the child's early experiences with his parents; and practically every Mundugumor is a hostile and aggressive individualist because he was socialized by harsh and aggressive parents.



In this chapter we shall also examine the affective meaning of culture as it shapes an individual's personality. This affective meaning is present in the mores and institutional practices of the people we have already studied, but we did not specifically emphasize it. We have in mind the fact that it is not the cultural values in themselves that are crucial in molding personality, but the affective meaning which they have for the growing child. Putting this another way, we might say that it is not every item of a culture but only its basic *quality*, its *ethos*, which makes every individual in a particular society so much like every other individual.

## The Problem

Although social psychologists are concerned with discovering common traits, or uniformity of behavior, in people everywhere, they are highly skeptical of the existence of a common, universal "human nature." They are deeply concerned with the possibility that there may be a fundamental personality or "character" structure corresponding to the fundamental system of values which dominates the life of a group. Our study of nonliterate societies strongly suggests that there is a Zuñi personality, and Tanala, Arapesh, and Mundugumor personalities. Is there, despite many individual differences, a personality which can be described as French, English, American, or German? Is there a "national" personality? When we come to the study of the impress of culture on modern man, our problem is complicated by the fact that there are many local differences in literate cultures. Our question is more easily answered in regard to nonliterate societies, for they are, on the whole, homogeneous.

**Studies of Ethos.** In Chapter 2, "The Method and Framework of Social Psychology," we defined the *ethos* as a system of values and ideals that gives to culture its essential and pervasive quality. It is the *Zeitgeist*, or "spirit of the age," peculiar to a culture. It may also be called the *outlook* of a culture. Thus, as we have seen, the outlook of the Kwakiutl is aggressive and competitive; of the Arapesh, gentle and cooperative; and of the Tchambuli, gay and nonchalant.

Attempts to pierce through to the prevailing bonds which integrate the personalities of men, to the *ethos*, are by no means new. Scholars have been interested in the "spirit" of a people, or its "national character," for at least a century and a half. De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1830), in which he describes the equalitarian spirit of the American, is an early attempt to characterize the *ethos* of a people. In the past two decades many books have been written on this subject, varying all the way from the



literary and intuitive analysis of De Madariaga to the "psychoanthropological" studies of Kardiner.<sup>1</sup>

Oswald Spengler made some penetrating studies of the ethos of historical cultures.<sup>2</sup> He described and analyzed the "temper" or "dispositions" of various peoples. The classical world of the Greeks, with its emphasis on order, prudence, and measure, he called "Apollonian." Its ethos was the well-ordered life, relatively free from passion and strife. The modern world, on the other hand, is "Faustian"; it stresses process, change, and conflict. Conflict, indeed, is the *feeling-tone* of Western civilization, its true ethos.<sup>3</sup>

Ruth Benedict analyzed in a similar manner the cultures of the Zuñis, Plains Indians, Dobuans, and Kwakiutl. The Zuñis emphasize the "middle road"—the value of sobriety, order, and cooperation. They eschew individualism and distrust excess in all things. Theirs is an "Apollonian" culture and personality make-up. On the other hand, the Plains Indians, like most American Indians, are "Dionysian." Their mode of living stresses passion and frenzy. This is seen most clearly in their practice of the "vision-dream," from which they believe they acquire supernatural power. These dreams are created by fasting, torture, drugs, and alcohol.<sup>4</sup> The Dobuans and the Kwakiutl are also characterized by a Dionysian ethos. Both stress impulsiveness, violence, and orgiastic experiences. The Dobuans express their Dionysian disposition through sorcery, black magic, and treachery; the Kwakiutl, by frenzied competitiveness and humiliation of their rivals and competitors.<sup>5</sup>

In the work of Sorokin we return to historical cultures. In his controversial theory of culture integration, Sorokin argues that there have been throughout the history of civilization three types of culture: ideational, sensate, and idealistic. An *ideational* culture is one in which the highest values of life and of personality are spiritual and eternal. Physical pleasures are eliminated and unity with the ultimate reality is sought. Examples of this ethos are found in Buddhism, Christianity, and the Mediaeval Church. The *sensate* ethos views the whole of reality as in flux. It values sense

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<sup>1</sup> S. de Madariaga, *Englishmen, Frenchmen and Spaniards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1928); A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (Columbia University Press, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> O. Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. by C. F. Atkinson, 2 vols. (New York: Knopf, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, chap. vii.

<sup>4</sup> R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), chap. vi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. v, vi.



pleasure; it is "Epicurean." Examples of the sensate ethos are found in ancient Egypt, in ancient China, and in the Epicurean period of Greek culture. The *idealistic*, or "mixed" culture, is a synthesis of the ideational and the sensate. It is characterized by a high order of life, stressing spiritual ideals, honesty, and good citizenship. The best example of this, according to Sorokin, is found in European civilization of the thirteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

### Ethos and Personality in Primitive Society

Our study of primitive societies has brought out the fact that there are at least two basic determinants in every society which affect the attitudes and behavior of its people: (1) the character of the basic disciplines and (2) the subsistence economy. As we learned in Chapter 4, the basic disciplines are the various rules and techniques used by society to teach the child its customs regarding eating, talking, elimination, and sexual expression. As we learned in Chapter 8, the food supply and methods of food production of a society determine the traits of personality of its members. To illustrate further the manner in which these cultural determinants operate, we shall examine the culture and personalities of the Marquesans.

**The Marquesans.<sup>7</sup>** The Marquesans are a Polynesian people who live on the Marquesas Islands in the central Pacific, about ten degrees south of the equator. There are three conditions of life which help to account for many of their attitudes and practices, viz., a precarious subsistence economy, an unbalanced sex-ratio, and poor parental care (basic disciplines).

**The subsistence economy.** The area in which the Marquesans live is very dry. Droughts, sometimes lasting three years, are frequent. During a long drought, when no crops can be grown and the supply of stored food is exhausted, starvation is very common. Domesticated animals are the source of only a small amount of food. Pigs, for example, are less valued as food than as ceremonial animals, for they are used in rites of marriage, funerals, feasts, and the like. Chickens are seldom

<sup>6</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, 4 vols. (New York: American Book, 1937-1941), Vol. I.

<sup>7</sup> We follow Linton for his description of Marquesan culture and Kardiner for his analysis of the Marquesan personality in A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), chaps. v. and vi. respectively.



used for food, and eggs are never eaten. The only important source of food, other than that obtained from tree crops and sugar cane, is fish.

As a consequence of their precarious subsistence economy, the Marquesans have many anxieties centering around food and eating. They place an extraordinary importance upon eating, particularly upon the quantity of food consumed. There is much feasting, and people feel proud of their gorged stomachs. There are numerous taboos surrounding eating and cooking, thereby increasing people's anxieties about food. These anxieties lead to hypochondriacal fixations, fear of disintegration, fear of incompleteness, fear of being eaten and the desire to eat others. Cannibalism is thus a direct result of starvation and food anxiety. To forestall disintegration and death, they have devised the techniques of multiple naming—i.e., duplicating oneself by assuming many names; being a good feeder as a means to prestige; embalming; and creating the notion of successive rebirths. These are all more or less desperate efforts to escape from the anxieties associated with food and food shortage.

*Unbalanced sex-ratio.* The shortage of women in Marquesas is intimately tied up with the character of the basic disciplines. This shortage affects the structure of the family, the relation of parents to children, of men to one another, and of women to one another. As one might expect in a society where men far outnumber women, the family is polyandrous, the usual ratio being two or three men to one woman in a household. The household generally consists of a household head, a group of other men, a wife, children, and old people. The several men have, of course, sexual rights with the wife, but the household head has the chief sexual rights as well as other prerogatives.

In Western eyes this form of family organization would indicate a great amount of sexual jealousy among the husbands. In the course of their daily relationship, however, no overt jealousy seems to be found. Jealousy appears when the men are drunk, strongly suggesting that jealousy is present but is not ordinarily expressed overtly. In case of quarrels, those taking part apologize when they become sober. According to Kardiner, overt jealousy is absent among the men for three reasons: first, from early childhood the child is accustomed to seeing his mother satisfying the sexual needs of several men; second, there are no restrictions on the child's own sexual interests, so that his sexual desires are readily satisfied; and third, the men realize that jealousy among them would jeopardize the productive system. Jealousy among women, on the other hand, would not affect the productive system and consequently is common and violent.



*Basic disciplines.* The most important fact regarding the rearing of children is that they are not breast-fed. This is due to the polyandrous nature of the family organization; i.e., maternal care is sacrificed to the basic need of sexual satisfaction for the men. A woman in Marquesas is foremost a courtesan to the men. Her breasts, particularly, have a high sexual value, and she cultivates them as sexual stimuli to the men while neglecting them as feeding organs for the infant. Therefore the child is deprived of the protection and tenderness which he might receive from his mother during feeding and finds in her only a source of frustration. He becomes indifferent, if not hostile, to his mother. The relations of children to the father, on the other hand, are close and tender.

The Oedipus complex, which most psychoanalysts describe as a universal relationship between parents and children, is absent in the Marquesas child.<sup>8</sup> This complex, according to Kardiner, is found only in societies where the sexual aim of the child is seriously interfered with, as for example in European and American society. In Marquesas the child is permitted to have sexual gratification freely and the parents often masturbate the young child to keep him quiet. The parents' interest in this connection, however, is not based on consideration of the child, but is one aspect of a general maternal neglect.<sup>9</sup> The full effect of sexual permissiveness for the child is thus dissipated by parental unconcern for the real needs of the growing child.

We have chosen the Marquesans for introducing the problem of the relation between ethos and basic personality primarily because, as Kardiner himself informs us, the study of their culture contributed most to the development of the concept of basic personality.<sup>10</sup> This culture, together with the others that we have described and analyzed, gives us a considerable body of evidence in support of the hypothesis of the existence of a basic personality.

The ethos of each culture is evident in its dominant institutions and practices. Of these institutions and practices there are at least four which give each culture its peculiar "flavor" or "feeling tone."<sup>11</sup> They are the basic

<sup>8</sup> Róheim challenges the conclusions of anthropologists regarding the limited distribution of the Oedipus complex by extensive discussions of several nonliterate societies, including Marquesas. See G. Róheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (New York: International Universities Press, 1950).

<sup>9</sup> Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, p. 205.

<sup>10</sup> Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, p. x.

<sup>11</sup> See G. Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origin and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947), chap. xxxv.



disciplines (parental care), the technical system (subsistence economy), the belief system (folklore, religion), and the social ideology. Corresponding to or emerging from these cultural factors is a type of attitude, belief, and behavior—a type of personality—which reflects the essential character of the culture as a whole. We shall now examine three modern, literate cultures and the basic personality which ought, theoretically, to emerge from each. For this purpose we have selected the cultures and personalities of the Japanese, Germans, and Americans.

### Japanese Culture and Personality

We have available today some excellent anthropological and psychological studies of the Japanese culture and personality, studies which are more than the untrained observations of travelers, merchants, or missionaries.<sup>12</sup> In this chapter we shall draw extensively on one of the best studies, Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*.<sup>13</sup>

**Social Organization.** A factor of great importance in the study of a culture is its social organization: the arrangement and functioning of its dominant institutions, particularly the family, the class structure, the economic organization, and the like. In Japan the social organization is a mixture of opposing trends. Thus, industrially Japan has been described by every student of its culture as a mixture of feudal landlordism and modern capitalistic production. At the same time, there is extensive state control of the economic system. The family is patriarchal with rigid control and hard discipline. The political system is highly centralized, and, until the end of World War II, was dominated by the military. Until recently, the religious worship of the emperor took precedence over everything. The emperor was thus a symbol at once of the highly centralized state, family devotion, and official religion.

<sup>12</sup> In the writer's judgment the best sources for the Japanese culture and personality are the following: R. Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946); G. Gorer, "Themes in Japanese Culture," *Trans. N.Y. Acad. Sci.*, 5 (1943), 106-124; D. G. Haring, "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, 6 (1946), 12-22; J. C. Maloney, "A Study in Neurotic Conformity: the Japanese," *Complex*, 5 (1951), 26-32.

<sup>13</sup> The reader is asked to note that some features of Japanese life have changed since their military defeat and the occupation of their country by American troops. How far these changes have actually affected the fabric of Japanese life and personality is not yet clear.



Conspicuous in Japanese culture is a hierarchical relation between people which pervades every aspect of their lives. Japanese society has had a rigid caste system for centuries. "Taking one's proper station," as Benedict describes it, is the dominant feeling tone of Japanese social life. In contrast to the American way, for instance, where relaxation from the ceremonials of etiquette and deference to others may take place at least in the family, in Japan these formalities are inculcated and meticulously observed on all occasions. Thus the wife bows to her husband, the child to his father, the younger brother to the older, and the sister to all her brothers. "Hierarchy based on sex and generation and primogeniture are part and parcel of family life."<sup>14</sup>

**Parental Care.** The socialization of the Japanese child is surprisingly different from what one might expect in view of the rigid codes of the Japanese people. In contrast to the controlled life of children in the United States, the training of young children in Japan entails few restrictions. Whereas in the United States the child's freedom is curtailed, and he becomes independent only when he reaches maturity, in Japan the "arc of life" is reversed. A baby enjoys a maximum of freedom. Restrictions become most numerous in the so-called prime of life, and by the time the individual reaches old age he enjoys once more the free and indulgent life of a child. Permissiveness characterizes the socialization of infants and young children.

Benedict suggests that a people as permissive with their children as the Japanese probably want babies. She adds that the Japanese do want them for two strong reasons: because it is a source of pleasure and happiness to have and love them, and because carrying on the family line is a cardinal virtue which adds to a person's status. The father must have a son to perpetuate the family line and to do homage to his memory after his death. The mother must have a child to maintain her security in the family—for without one she may be discarded for another wife—and in order to become a mother-in-law and exercise authority over her son's marriage or over his wife.<sup>15</sup>

After his birth the Japanese baby is placed in his own bed. Custom demands a bed for the child's own, not so much because people consider it more comfortable but because of the magical belief that every new life must have its own new bed. When the baby is about a year old, he is permitted to sleep in his mother's arms in her own bed.

<sup>14</sup> Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.



Since Japanese babies are breast-fed, they must go unfed for two or three days after birth, or until the mother has her own milk. From this time on during his early childhood the baby may have the breast at any time. A great deal of comfort and pleasure is derived from nursing both by the baby and the mother. A woman's greatest physiological pleasure, the Japanese believe, is found in nursing. The breast is not only for nourishment, but for pleasure and comfort as well.

The mother is with the baby constantly. She carries him strapped on her back wherever she goes. He is always a part of her daily activities. Thus, as Benedict writes:

She talks to it. She hums to it. She puts it through the etiquette motions. If she returns a greeting herself, she moves the baby's head and shoulders forward so that it too makes salutation. The baby is always counted in. Every afternoon she takes it with her into the hot bath and plays with it as she holds it on her knees.<sup>16</sup>

Toilet training begins early, usually by the time the baby is three or four months old. This is done by the mother's anticipating his needs and holding him in her hands outside the door. While the child is performing his toilet acts, the mother whistles low and monotonously and the child soon learns the "meaning" of the sound and his role in the total relationship. There is no coercion and practically no punishment in case of the child's failure. The whole process, while rigorous and relentless, is suffused with parental interest and affection so that the child is gradually prepared to accept the later restrictions of adulthood. Psychoanalysis might find here the key to the Japanese "anal-sadistic" character, with its exaggerated emphasis upon meticulousness, cleanliness, order, and punctuality. Whatever interpretation one might put upon the effect of anal training, it is reasonable to assume that by the sheer process of conditioning and social learning it should play an important part in the socialization of the child.<sup>17</sup> It should be added, however, that the proverbial neatness and cleanliness of the Japanese is considerably fostered by constant admonitions to the growing child to be clean and to avoid dirt. Indeed, "dirty" is the third of three words which the Japanese child learns early to respond to, the others being "dangerous" and "bad."<sup>18</sup>

The horror of masturbation, so common in American society, is absent in Japanese life. The mother herself calls attention to the child's genitals,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

<sup>17</sup> See G. Gorer, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 260.



especially if he is a boy, when she bathes and plays with him. The Japanese condemn childish sexuality only when it is enjoyed out of its proper contexts. Masturbation can be practiced without fear of evil consequences and without shame. Indeed shame has no institutionalized or psychological place in the life of a young Japanese child. As the Japanese themselves say, smilingly, "Children know no shame . . . That is why they are so happy."<sup>10</sup>

Weaning takes place late in the child's life, most commonly when a new baby is born. Although in recent years attempts have been made by the government to institute weaning at eight months, it is far from being the custom. Psychologically, the important fact about weaning is its suddenness. The child who has experienced almost constant physical contact with his mother is now, at the birth of another child, drastically put on his own and mercilessly teased when he displays interest in the mother's breasts. At about the same time he is deprived of the pleasure of genital play by his mother or nursemaid, although he may masturbate "on his own." These denials and deprivations result in severe frustrations for the child.

Proceeding on the Dollard hypothesis that frustration tends to lead to aggression, we should find many violent responses to the child's frustrations. The known data confirm this conclusion. Temper tantrums are very common, especially in boys. They shower abuse upon their mothers, who are, of course, the chief frustrators of the children's physical and emotional impulses. The mother takes these abuses with a resigned attitude. The girl children, on the other hand, are at a great disadvantage in this regard, for their temper tantrums and other hostile responses are promptly suppressed. Consequently, the girl child is compelled to build up a habit of chronic repression of her affective impulses. On the basis of the known relationship between repression and neurotic behavior, it is reasonably safe to conclude that the hysterical disorders of Japanese women, which have been noted by numerous writers on Japanese life, are intimately connected with the repressive nature of their emotional life. In the same manner the hostile, almost contemptible attitude of the men toward their wives, their propensity toward suicide, and their cruelty in war may be traced to the same sources of frustration.

Japanese impassivity, which is so inscrutable to Western eyes, is inculcated early. There is much emphasis on physical skill and immobility. Before the child is two years old, his father teaches him to sit motionlessly on the floor. The girls must observe the proper physical posture even when sleeping. "Modesty in a woman's sleeping position," says Benedict, "is as

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270.



strong in Japan as modesty about being seen naked is in the United States.”<sup>20</sup> Thus the little girl must learn to sleep lying straight and with her legs together.

*The fear of ridicule.* The fear of ridicule is a marked feature of Japanese life, and it begins in the family. We have already called attention to the role of teasing in the weaning process. This teasing is applied to other aspects of the child's training. The fundamental purpose of teasing is to teach the child to avoid later embarrassment. Thus when he cries he is admonished not to be a girl, but to be a man. The mother will pet and fondle another child, threaten to give her own away, to which the latter responds with jealous outcries and physical blows against his mother. She will tease him further by expressing her preference for the boy's father, whom she describes as a nice man. The immediate response of the boy is jealousy and the determination to be as nice as his father.

The emotional turmoil induced by this constant teasing is the greater, as Benedict points out, because the home is the source of security and safety. The total impact of this teasing is to create the psychological soil for the fear of ridicule and of social rejection.<sup>21</sup> While it is impossible, short of careful psychoanalysis of individual cases, to measure the full effects of this teasing upon the growing child, existing behavioral evidence suggests that terror and panic are the usual consequences.

*Later Childhood Training.* The fear of losing safety—safety which springs from parental indulgence—is joined with the fear of ridicule to create a powerful need to be correct, proper, and superior in the eyes of others. By the time the child is ten he must learn to subordinate his strong will to his obligations to family, neighbors, and nation. He now begins to pass to “the status of a debtor who must walk respectfully if he is ever to pay back what he owes.”<sup>22</sup> More specifically his training now becomes overwhelmingly concerned with two obligations: *giri-to-the-world* and *giri-to-one's-name*.<sup>23</sup> The first refers to duties to the liege lord, family, relatives, etc. The second refers to duties of clearing one's reputation of insult or failure, and of observing the proprieties. Insults are now resented in earnest.

The most fierce concern with *giri-to-one's-name* begins when the boys enter either the middle school (beyond the sixth grade) or the army. At this time, when they are approximately thirteen years old, they are suddenly confronted, without benefit of gradual prior experience, with the competi-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.



tion of entrance examinations and competitive ranking of every student in every subject. Rivalry, bitterness, suspicion of favoritism, and merciless hazing by members of the upper classes in school are now their chief preoccupation. In the army the first-year recruits are handled in a similar fashion by the second-year recruits. In both school and army training, humiliation is a constant threat; and *giri-to-one's-name*, an obsession.

Girls, on the other hand, do not learn the code of *giri-to-one's-name*, and they experience the life neither of the middle schools nor the army. Their life cycle, as Benedict points out, is much more consistent than that of the boys. They learn early to accept the privileged position of the boys, and self-assertion is denied them. They have their compensations, however, in that they can preoccupy themselves with their beauty, clothes, and enhancement of their charms.

Thus, while infancy and early childhood in Japan are periods of indulgence, particularly for boys, late childhood and adolescence are periods of strict discipline, self-control, and extreme circumspection. For the boy the transition from one period to the other is abrupt and affectively charged. We may best sum up this training in Haring's words:

The growing boy learns to conform to stereotyped masculine roles explicitly set forth in precept and in story as part of Japanese cultural tradition. He is indoctrinated with Confucian loyalty and respect for elders, and with Japanese martial ideals. His mother and sisters minister to him, indulge him, and obey him; by masculine example and teaching he learns that no real man acknowledges tender feelings toward women. His affection for his mother—which may be very real—is repressed from the time that he discovers that it is his prerogative to lord it over any female.<sup>24</sup>

**Japanese Personality.** We shall now consider the chief characteristics of the Japanese personality, striving wherever possible to reach the more subtle psychological factors which play a part in the attitudes and behavior.

Ambivalence characterizes both men and women, but for different reasons. In the man's case this is the result of two divergent sets of expectations, namely, the permissiveness of childhood, with its tenderness, safety, and security, and the sudden introduction of rigid behavior patterns. The first sudden change is the abrupt weaning of one child at the birth of another one, with its inevitable frustrations. The second sudden change comes at the threshold of adolescence when the child's freedom is abruptly

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<sup>24</sup> Haring, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Reprinted by permission of the author and *The Far Eastern Quarterly*.



curtailed by the demand for circumspection in all things—by giri-to-the-world and giri-to-one's-name.

The woman's ambivalence is derived in part from the weaning process, which is the same as that for the boy, and in part from the constant repressions which are her lot. Her ego must be subdued, her impulses must be held in check, and her prerogatives are very few. Her erotic impulses are not adequately channelized, since sexual intercourse is not for her pleasure but only for procreation and for the satisfaction of the man. The hysterical personality, expressed most often in nymphomania, which has been noted by all careful observers of Japanese life, is consequently a common occurrence in Japanese women.<sup>25</sup>

It is reasonable to suppose that the sudden break in the boy's habits should be fraught with serious emotional disorganization. Whether this break is in the nature of a severe psychological trauma is not clear from the evidence, but that it results in an excessive amount and intensity of frustration, with its accompanying hostility and ill-feeling, there can be little doubt. It would be difficult to account for the lifelong grudges, the deferred revenges, the suicidal trends, and the sadistic behavior of the Japanese in war on any other grounds. The frustration and aggressiveness resulting from the sudden break in habit formation can be further witnessed in the sexual behavior of the Japanese. Sexual relations are characterized by sadism and by dominance over a contemptible female, by boastfulness, and by disgust. Aggressive obscenity in schoolboys and ribald sexual humor in many women, particularly prostitutes, are characteristic and have been noted by several investigators. Homosexuality and the sexual mutilation of enemies in war probably spring from the same frustrations, conflicts, and repressions. Perhaps one can also explain on this basis the negative attitude toward the human body which is commonly expressed in the pornographic drawings which constitute a popular form of Japanese art.<sup>26</sup>

The Japanese male has been described as anal-sadistic by virtue of early toilet training. He has also been described as autoerotic and narcissistic. The autoerotic trait may be associated with the early practice of masturbation and the manipulation of his genitals as a placebo by his mother or nurse-maid. His narcissistic character may well be a part of the inflated ego caused by his favored and overindulged place in the family constellation and by the fact that sexual relations with his wife are devoid of tenderness and concern for her own happiness. Sexual intercourse with his wife, we

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



pointed out, is for procreative purposes, and he cannot show affection for her in the act by virtue of her alleged inferiority. His narcissism is enhanced by the prostitute, on whom he can express his sexual passions freely and without obligation. His narcissism, finally, is reflected in the obsessive concern with his own status in his group and the "neurotic" fear of loss of face.

Is the Japanese a neurotic character? If normality were judged solely on the basis of conformity with the prevailing customs and institutions of a society, the Japanese might be diagnosed as "normal"—that is, he acts in accordance with the expectations of the group. Viewed, however, from the standpoint of his own emotional instability and inner conflicts, he must be described as neurotic. This view gains support from the fact that neurosis is more common in Japan than in many societies.<sup>27</sup> This is true of both men and women.

That the Japanese is neurotic, or at least exceedingly tense, may be the result of the fact that by the time he is nine or ten he cannot even count on obtaining security from his family circle. He can maintain family approval and security only as long as he lives up to the principle of *giri-to-his-name*. If other groups criticize or reject him, his family will not only not defend him but will positively turn against him. To the Japanese, family approval by the "outside world" is probably of greater importance than anywhere else in the world. He is thus thrown completely on his own and he must perpetually defend himself against criticism or failure, validate his own reputation, and forestall ridicule of his family. Accordingly, the Japanese learns early "to fear outsiders and to cringe at the merest hint of ridicule." At the same time there are intense rivalries and bitter hatreds growing out of this obsession with family reputation "all of which must be concealed beneath the polite rubrics of Confucian filial piety. Thus one is responsible to and absolutely dependent upon a group in which he feels no adequate psychological security."<sup>28</sup>

Viewed from the standpoint of adjustment to the culture, the Japanese doubtless adapts himself to the rigid way of life in his society. We must remind ourselves once more, however, of an earlier observation by Murphy: we must not forget at what cost a person adapts himself to his culture.<sup>29</sup> The evidence suggests that the Japanese individual—at least the urban individual—adapts himself to the culture of his people at a heavy psychological price.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>29</sup> Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 806.



## German Culture and Personality

The study of German basic personality is beset with difficulties. In the first place, German society is complex and varied, resembling our own in many ways. In the second place, Germany as a political state has undergone profound changes as a result of national unification, two world wars, serious inflation, economic depression, and unprecedented political upheavals. These profound changes, we must assume, effected important changes and disturbances in the attitudes and behavior of a large segment of the German people. Nevertheless a cultural theme and a basic personality have been discerned by several competent investigators of German culture and behavior.<sup>30</sup>

**Social Organization.** Germany is one of the most thoroughly industrialized nations in the world, and on the continent of Europe she has been industrially supreme. Unlike industrial capitalism in the United States, the economic system of Germany has been since its inception under state control. This is part and parcel of the close relationship between state and society which has characterized Germany since her unification after the Franco-Prussian War.

Class divisions have been strong, although social mobility is fairly extensive. Stratification consists of the aristocracy, the Junkers and military caste, the upper middle class, the lower middle class, and the laboring class.<sup>31</sup> Until after World War II, authority was focused in a highly centralized state and was symbolized in the form of a constitutional monarch (*Kaiser*) or a charismatic<sup>32</sup> leader (*Führer*).

The German family is strongly patriarchal and authoritarian. The sub-

<sup>30</sup> See especially the following: R. M. Brickner, *Is Germany Incurable?* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1943); E. H. Erikson, "Hitler's Imagery and German Youth," *Psychiatry*, 5 (1942), 475-493; E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart, 1941); C. J. Leuba, in G. Murphy, ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945), pp. 82-92; D. Rodnick, *Postwar Germans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948); B. Schaffner, *Father Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948); and F. Schuman, *The Nazi Dictatorship* (New York: Knopf, 1936).

<sup>31</sup> According to Max Weber it is a common error to place the German Junkers in the aristocracy. They are essentially a "bourgeois" stratum of entrepreneurs." See H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, eds. and trans., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 386.

<sup>32</sup> A "charismatic" leader is one who is endowed by his followers with mystical, semi-religious qualities and who is accordingly followed blindly and irrationally. Hitler was that type of leader.



ordination of the mother and children to the authority of the father, who is frequently harsh and uncompromising, is practically universal. During Nazi rule the authoritarianism of the family was rapidly relinquished to the state, and the *Führer* became the substitute for a despotic father.

The religion of Germany has been largely Lutheran and Catholic, and much of the German character of moral constriction before the advent of Hitler can be traced to its repressive Protestantism. During Hitler's rule religion was to a great extent discarded in favor of Nazi fanaticism and the cult of German race superiority.

**Parental Care.** Since the German family is patriarchal, its method of socializing the child is strict, rigid, and peremptory. This is true generally, however, more of the father than of the mother. His treatment of his children, while mixed with pride and sentiment, is largely suppressive and punitive. For this reason the German child learns quickly to show marked deference to men in authority and to fear anyone in a position of ascendancy or leadership. This deference to and fear of the father was easily transferred to the Nazi state during Hitler's rise to power. The basic values were already laid down in the family and Hitler had only to capitalize on the German's docility in the face of authority and the repressed rebelliousness which characterizes almost every German youth. Obedience to and respect for the father became obeisance and loyalty to the *Führer*.

While German socialization of the child is characterized by strictness, there is nothing unusual or particularly adverse in the inculcation of the basic disciplines. Breast-feeding is widespread. There is considerable regularity in infant feeding schedules, but they are not overrigid. In this respect the German mother behaves very much as the American mother does, and it is difficult to point to any significant difference.

Weaning is seldom abrupt, although the method of accomplishing it is somewhat rigorous. This may take the form of prolonged denial, making the nipple unpalatable, and playful teasing. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the weaning process as practiced by German mothers has any serious consequences for the adult personality.

Toilet training on the whole is gradual and is generally completed slightly later than in the American family. Failures on the child's part are met with mild punishment, scolding, or teasing. The German mother places a great deal of emphasis on cleanliness and uses various means to condition the child to the offensiveness of a soiled diaper. If the adult German is described as an anal-sadistic character, as he has been by a number of investigators, this trait is probably less due to punishment for sphincter



incontinence than to a pervasive and rigid demand for cleanliness. The German housewife has what seems to an outsider an almost neurotic fear of dirt, and this fear is absorbed by practically every child in his early development. The demand for cleanliness is generalized into an almost obsessive concern—again perhaps only to an outsider—with meticulousness and order. *Ordnung* involves not merely an absence of disarray or of slovenliness but an intense and exaggerated fear of *disorder*. As Brickner describes it, women from other countries “who admired the impeccable neatness of German parlors, paled before the ritualistic zeal of German curtain-washing—ten successive soapings and rinsings before the German housewife could be content with her work.”<sup>33</sup>

The anal character of the German, then, is not a product of rigid toilet training—for as we saw, it is gradual and the method is not oversevere—but of an excessive valuation of cleanliness and order which the German child is *deliberately taught*, as well as conditioned to by precept, example, and punishment throughout his whole life. The rigidity which characterizes the anal personality is explained in the same way. The German is rigid not because of interruption of his eliminative activities or because of punishment for anal incontinence but because of the exaggerated emphasis on its uncleanness.

The strict form of upbringing is softened somewhat by maternal affection and indulgence. The German mother acts as a psychological cushion against the paternal discipline, not by defying the father—that would be close to unthinkable—but by genuine affection, sympathy, and by feelings bordering on sentimentality. This situation is charged by considerable ambivalence, especially toward the father, with whom the boy identifies himself and whose authority he would like to challenge but to whom he must nevertheless defer. Ambivalence toward the mother is less pronounced. It grows out of the boy's need to reject feminine docility and to play down maternal affection in the face of external pressures toward aggressiveness. Thus by the time the German boy reaches adolescence, the gentler qualities which he derived from his mother's influence have almost completely given way, through repression, to the hard qualities of German masculinity. As a consequence of the cleavage in his early socialization, the German boy seldom possesses a clear-cut affective disposition. He is, rather, a mixture of inconsistent attitudes and impulses. This cleavage in his personality is a product of his desire to reject both the maternal docility and paternal authority.

<sup>33</sup> Brickner, *op. cit.*, pp. 248–249.



A half-hearted rebelliousness against the parents has characterized the German boy for generations. This is manifested in the practice in earlier times of *Wanderschaft*, in which the boy ran away and became an apprentice. Preceding the Hitler era, the spirit of rebelliousness was also expressed in mystic communion with nature on holidays and on vacations. This feature of German adolescence has always been strong, and devotion to some mystic being like Nature, Race, Nation, and the like has been one of its dominant characteristics. These activities were all the more important, as Erikson points out, in that they specifically excluded the father.<sup>34</sup> They were, indeed, a means of rebelling against him. But outright rebellion was and is exceedingly rare.

**Education.** The strict, rigid, and authoritarian education begun in the home is continued and greatly intensified in the school. While in the home the boy is frequently admonished to act like a soldier, in school the military ideal is constantly held before him. When at six he enters school his training is directed, even more than at home, to making him a future soldier. The uniform becomes the symbol of his coming career. In earlier days, the little boys celebrated the Emperor's birthday by playing soldiers, by dressing in cardboard uniforms and carrying a tin sword at their side.<sup>35</sup>

Severe punishment, usually in the form of beating, has been meted out to German school children for generations. The Germans have justified this brutality by declaring that the great soldiers, such as Frederick the Great, who are responsible for Germany's greatness derived their qualities of character from the severe thrashings administered to them by their fathers and schoolmasters.

In the secondary school, or *Gymnasium*, the training becomes even more severe and militaristic. The buildings are invariably drab, gloomy, and uncomfortable. This is in keeping with the militaristic notion that discomfort is good for discipline and that a good "soldier" takes it without a murmur. The pupils have to rise early in the morning and are often half asleep while they mechanically recite their memorized lessons. "Between the ages of twelve and fifteen, the tedium became conscious and all but unbearable. Afterwards you got some fun out of it, for the reading of ancient classics was interesting."<sup>36</sup>

The teacher has always been infallible in the German system, and a

<sup>34</sup> Erikson, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Brickner, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted by Brickner from a statement written for him by a friend. See *ibid.*, pp. 253-254.



student would not dare to question or challenge him. At least up to the last few years, the teacher, being a government official, was always right and absolutely just. He copied the manner of the German officer, and his classes were modeled along military patterns. This military attitude reached into relationships outside the classroom. Relations between teacher and students were usually formal, almost never conversational or chatty. Greeting the teacher on the street was as mandatory upon the student as saluting an officer was upon the ordinary soldiers, and infractions of the rule regarding it were met with almost the same severity.

German education, like the whole process of socialization, is far less educative than indoctrinating. Genuine education is always directed toward the development of a child's total personality, toward the attainment of independence and the satisfaction of human wishes. The process of growing up is normally an enjoyable one. But Germans, as everyone knows who has carefully observed them, are seldom happy after the fifth or sixth year.<sup>37</sup> Even their childhood, which they look back to with nostalgia, is characterized by a happiness which comes, not from spontaneity and carefreeness, but from the safety of routine and parental authority. The rigid and suppressive educational system only carries on in exaggerated form the ideals and practices of German family life. The ideal is not independence, as in all constructive forms of education, but submission to authority. Since the German's emotional life is inseparable from his education, as in all forms of socialization, he is conditioned to experience greatest satisfaction in the security which comes from self-abasement and conformity. Because his emotions are so deeply a part of the dominance-submission relationship, he is easily overcome by anxiety if he is left to his own devices. Obedience is as natural to him as his other inculcated habits, and the fear of punishment for disobedience is a powerful incentive toward docility and conformity. Freedom to a German is not only associated with lawlessness and a challenge to *Ordnung*, but is a positive source of anxiety and is hence to be carefully avoided.

**The German Personality.** As we pointed out in our discussion of the Japanese character, a description of a culture cannot be separated from a description of the basic personality which the culture helps to mold. Thus, in describing German life and culture, we have also outlined the German personality. Our purpose in this section is to point out more specifically the chief characteristics of that personality.

*Obsessive-compulsive traits.* We have referred to the extreme

<sup>37</sup> See Schaffner, *op. cit.*, p. 41.



rigidity of German upbringing. The German feels most secure when he can live in all things according to clean-cut formulas. This is most clearly reflected in his concept of *duty*. *Pflicht*, or duty, is an obsessive theme of German life, and obedience to authority its compulsive expression in behavior. Accordingly, disturbance of the existing pattern of life and thought is intolerable, and a repetitive conformance to the established order in all things is the greatest virtue. Most Germans will patiently and thoroughly—which in the case of all obsessive-compulsive behavior means mechanically and unimaginatively—do what is expected of them. As Schaffner remarks, disobedience is a violation of both one's respect for one's father and the abstract concept of duty.<sup>38</sup>

The psychological value of this obsessive-compulsive behavior for the German, as for any neurotic person of this type, lies in its tension-discharging and anxiety-reducing function. Because of his fear of parental disapproval, failure, and humiliation, he redoubles his efforts to avoid these consequences by harder work and more meticulous performance of the same duties. German thoroughness, industriousness, and devotion to the job, to which attention has been called by every observer of German life and character, are roughly equivalent to the ritualistic behavior of obsessive-compulsive patients. One cannot rightly say that these traits are "non-German *Weltanschauung*, for they seldom give positive satisfaction. The German does not do his work because he finds it satisfying in the usual sense, but because it relieves him from the anxiety which a fear of failure to perform one's duty tends to beget. The basic motive in doing his work is not, as Schaffner astutely observes, "the completion of an act to one's own satisfaction, but fear of reprisal from authority for failing to reach the goal that was set."<sup>39</sup> This is the price the German must pay for living in a society where worship of *Disziplin* (discipline), *Pflicht* (duty), and *Ordnung* (orderliness) are cardinal virtues.

The obsessive-compulsive German is thus a highly rigid individual. Having once mastered a way of doing things or having arrived at a set of conclusions, nothing can sway him, nothing can be changed. He is thus conservative, traditional, and fearful of change. This links up perfectly with his strong sense of obedience and the total absence of revolt in his character. It is not for nothing that the German people have never effectively resisted tyranny or engaged in open revolt against an oppressive government. German rebels do not rise against established authority, how-

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.



ever tyrannical; they emigrate to other countries instead. For this sort of behavior the German has had a long preparation, as we have seen, from the automatic obedience to parental authority to the youth's emancipation through *Wanderschaft*, or through romantic revolt as a *Wandervogel* (literally Wanderbird, but psychologically meaning mystic communion with a super-personal being such as nature, culture, race, and the like). Nowhere in his life has there been an effective challenge of patriarchal authority, either at home or in the nation at large.

*Self-abasement.* From the time he is a young child, the German learns to submit to the will of the father or others who have a superordinate position in the social hierarchy. The German soon realizes that the surest road to acceptance is to bow to the will of others who are hierarchically above him. The greater the hierarchial superiority of another, the more he bows and scrapes to avoid displeasure or gain approval. The greater the need to revolt against authority, the greater is his feeling of guilt and the more he must abase himself before others. This is the well-known masochistic trait of the typical German. The obsequiousness of the German before authority has been noted by different investigators, and his servile behavior toward the occupation troops in Germany has been described by several recent scholars.<sup>40</sup>

*Aggression.* Masochism is aggression turned inward toward oneself. But masochism has its limits and can become unbearable to the individual. The German has traditionally been in a position where he could under certain circumstances extravert his inner aggression upon others. The most common occasion is provided by the hierarchical arrangement of German social relationships. If the German individual is below someone, he is also above someone: his wife, children, servants, etc. He can always lord it over his subordinates, and he does so, often quite arbitrarily, if only to show his right to respect or deference from others. He acts aggressively not because he was "born that way" but because he was reared in an atmosphere of aggressive authority. He is reproducing in his adult behavior the kind of human relationships which he experienced in his home as a child at the hands of his own parents, particularly the father.

The aggressiveness of contemporary Germans as expressed in Nazi brutality was not, however, a reproduction of the father's hardness toward his children, for the father's authority over his children is not generally manifested in deliberate brutality. His authoritarian strictness is based on a sincere interest in the welfare of his children. If the Nazi was inordinately

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<sup>40</sup> For example, *ibid.*



brutal and cruel, we must look for another explanation. Schaffner's discerning observation is a very plausible one: the Nazi was cruel in order to wreak vengeance upon outsiders who had challenged established authority or upon those who frustrated him in his, to him, rightful aim to get a place in the sun. This need for vengeance explains, in part, the Nazi's brutality toward the Jew, who became a scapegoat, a cause in the Nazi's mind of Germany's woes.

It would be a mistake, however, wholly to disengage the German's brutality from the family pattern. The relationship is there, but it is indirect. The revenge is connected with the strict German family life in the form of retaliation upon others for a feeling of frustration and hatred which he cannot direct toward his own parents, particularly the father. Brutality, as Schaffner points out, is probably an angry response to the hardness of the treatment which the German receives from others. "Germans," writes Schaffner, "seem to employ brutality to punish one who misuses authority and to retaliate against those who cause them frustration."<sup>41</sup> Those who misuse authority are, in German eyes, those who attempt to displace the legitimate father-figure, which is intolerable to the German, since it is an attack upon the source of his greatest identification and security.

*Manliness.*<sup>42</sup> There is no other trait which the German holds in higher esteem than manliness. This is seen in his exaggerated emphasis upon physical strength, bravery, fighting, a military bearing, and a contempt for anything suggesting feminine traits in a man, such as tenderness and pity. The German tends to equate kindness with weakness.<sup>43</sup> In order to develop or prove manliness, he will engage in activities, even as a young boy, that will toughen him physically. He will take his beatings from father or schoolmaster without flinching; will frequently fight with other boys—a trait quite conspicuous in the lives of all healthy German boys; will generally behave aggressively toward anyone toward whom *Ehrfurcht*, or respect, is not expected.

The cult of manliness is expressed in and buttressed by a variety of customs and social rituals. Thus a German male meticulously evades any activity which has been traditionally conceived as feminine. It is hard to imagine a German helping his wife with the dishes. In fact, he will try to avoid being seen in the kitchen, since it has traditionally been the exclusive

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>42</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 54-57.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. A. H. Maslow, "The Authoritarian Character Structure," *J. Soc. Psych.*, 18 (1943), 401-411.



domain of the woman. He cultivates an authoritative air in order to show those beneath him where they belong and to command instant obedience. Many menial tasks which in the United States would be performed by the man, out of consideration for his wife, are done by women in Germany. Every visitor to Germany will have observed that the woman, not the man, carries the parcels or pushes the baby carriage. If he has been in a German home, he will have noted that the husband's highly polished shoes were shined by his wife—or occasionally by one of the children, seldom if ever by the husband.<sup>44</sup>

The finest expressions of manliness according to German standards are military life and war. For both of these he is thoroughly prepared in his childhood. The German boy early experiences marching and drilling, the overbearing manner of those in authority, and the like. To the average boy the ideal of military hardness is the *Landser*, the ordinary recruit; to the more educated the ideal is the Prussian *Leutnant*, or lieutenant. He is taught in his home and at school to love military glory and to die for his country gladly. Military life holds promise of the continued security that he finds in subjecting himself to others or in closely identifying himself with the soldier. *Der gute Kamerad*—the good comrade or “buddy”—is not merely a German poetic utterance; it is an expression of primal security which comes from sacrificing oneself for the *Vaterland*.

*Exaggerated cleanliness.* As we have shown, exaggerated cleanliness is an expression of the German's passion for order. Cleanliness and an almost phobic attitude toward dirt is inculcated in all German children. To be dirty is to be impure. As the German child absorbs the attitude concerning cleanliness, he learns also that other peoples and nations are evaluated in the same way. Thus, as Schaffner remarks, the German learns to think of his own nation not only as superior to others but as cleaner than others. Schaffner believes that the German's dislike and misunderstanding of other peoples is due to his fear of contamination by them. Hence, the German's insistence on racial superiority and racial purity is the result of his fear of uncleanness.<sup>45</sup>

Although the German girl's life is more circumscribed than that of the German boy, she nevertheless possesses the same characteristics in attenuated form. While she does not become a soldier and lead a Spartan life, she admires manliness and physical strength. When she becomes a mother, she looks forward to the day when her own son will become a *Landser*, even though his departure into the army will be marked by tears and sad

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.



leave-taking. While she rarely uses corporal punishment with her children, she either approves of it in principle or tacitly agrees with her husband's use of it. In her concern with cleanliness and order, she is usually more compulsive than her husband. While her attitude toward her children has strong affective and sentimental elements, her emphasis is less on maternal love and more on supervision and control. Family solidarity and family pride, more than deep affection and love, characterize the attitude of both parents toward their children.

**Conclusions on German Personality.** The temptation to regard the German's behavior, even in his native setting, as a psychiatric problem is strong. The German gives the impression by his training, attitudes, and actions of being a "neurotic" individual. Brickner calls attention to the aggressive and suspicious character of the German, his inability to understand people of other cultures, and his need to project upon outsiders (foreigners, Jews, etc.) his own subjective trends. Upon this evidence, Brickner characterizes the German as a paranoic. Although this conclusion seems plausible, there is too little of the anthropologist's objectivity in Brickner's study, and too much urgency to prove that the German is abnormal. Our conclusion must be that the German personality is characterized by obsessive-compulsive behavior and by paranoic trends, but that he cannot be correctly described as either an obsessive-compulsive or a paranoic personality.<sup>46</sup>

## American Culture and Personality

While the analysis of Japanese and German personality structure is beset by difficulties, an analysis of the American of the United States is even more difficult. While there are discontinuities and divergences in Japanese and German culture and behavior, as there are in all cultures, even in most nonliterate ones, the variety and complexity which face the student of American culture and behavior are almost overwhelming.<sup>47</sup> In the following pages we have attempted to describe and analyze American culture and personality characterizing the *urban* United States.

**Social Organization.** American society has undergone careful and

<sup>46</sup> We use the term *paranoic* rather than *paranoid* to avoid confusion with paranoid schizophrenia. See H. Bonner, "The Problem of Diagnosis in Paranoic Disorder," *Amer. J. Psychiat.*, 107 (1951), 677-683.

<sup>47</sup> The term *American* in this chapter refers to the culture and behavior of people in the United States.



detailed scrutiny by the social scientist in the past quarter-century.

These studies are in the nature of sociological-anthropological descriptions and dissections of what are purported to be representative communities in the United States.<sup>48</sup> Attempts at psychological studies of the American personality have been made by an American and by a British anthropologist.<sup>49</sup>

American society outside the rural areas is dominated by industrial and technological folkways and by the economic philosophy of *laissez-faire* capitalism. The class system is relatively flexible and "open," making status mobility, especially from lower to middle and upper classes, a powerful incentive and a fairly common achievement. The open class system fosters, and even makes well-nigh inevitable, a great amount of personal competitiveness in social and economic relationships. This fact has important consequences for the attitudes and behavior of a large segment of the American population.

The American family organization, while formerly patriarchal, is very definitely shifting toward an equalitarian and companionship orientation, with considerable child-centeredness. This however, it should be added, is true largely only of urban families, particularly the apartment-house families. The rural family is semi-patriarchal, and the suburban is becoming matricentric, a form in which the mother is the center of family life.<sup>50</sup>

**Parental Care.** Parental care in American society varies somewhat with the type of family. Generally speaking, maternal authority is considerably stronger than paternal authority, so that socialization and control of the child are vested largely in the mother. While strict discipline still characterizes the rural and the immigrant families, permissiveness and mild punitive measures are on the whole noticeable features of parent-child relationships.

<sup>48</sup> See the following: A. Davis, B. B. and M. R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); A. B. Hollingshead, *Elmtown's Youth* (New York: Wiley, 1949); R. S. and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929); also by same authors and publisher, *Middletown in Transition*, 1937; W. L. Warner and P. S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941); see also other volumes by W. L. Warner in "Yankee City Series"; J. West, *Plainville, U.S.A.*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

<sup>49</sup> M. Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (New York: Morrow, 1942); G. Gorer, *The American People* (New York: Norton, 1948).

<sup>50</sup> For a very good discussion of the varied family types in American culture, see E. W. Burgess and H. J. Locke, *The Family* (New York: American Book, 1945), chaps. iii-v.



Nursing varies considerably with the fashions handed down by pediatricians and child-experts. Breast-feeding is not the rule with American mothers, and weaning tends to be early rather than late. Bottle-feeding is common, not only because of lactic deficiency but because of its greater convenience for the American mother who participates in a variety of social and civic activities. Perhaps it is also common because of the exaggerated emphasis on the privacy of the nursing act, which automatically limits the mother's social interactions with others.

Weaning, on the whole, is gradual and is performed with indulgent concern for the comfort of the infant, although here again there is considerable variability, the concern with the infant's welfare being determined to no small extent by the type of family, the social and educational level of the mother, etc.

Toilet training is usually not abrupt, but emphasis upon cleanliness is a marked feature. Genital play, which distresses and even shocks many American mothers, is more often than not met in the traditional manner of restraint, reproof, or mild slaps. Thanks to the diffusion of information on this practice, American mothers are learning to view it in a saner light.

*Competition and aggression.* American informal education in the home and on the playground encourages a strong competitive and aggressive disposition. Competitiveness and aggression in turn are fostered by the American emphasis on success, to get ahead, to outstrip everyone, including the parents themselves. These aims are stressed in a variety of ways later, by the school, newspaper, radio, movies, and pulp magazines. Through success the child can be vouchsafed parental love. As Margaret Mead puts it, the American baby learns that its parents' love is conditional upon the way in which it compares with others.<sup>51</sup> The child is anxiously compared with other children in matters ranging from his eating habits to his ability to hold his own in his fights with other children. The mother's preoccupation with the child's success, especially in comparing him constantly with his peers, is a reflection of her anxiety over her own success. If her child should not compare favorably with other children, the fact is easily construed as her own failure as a mother. If the child does not compare well with others, her anxious concern for him increases and her determination to help him catch up and prove herself a good mother at the same time takes on a nervous proportion. A child who is a "failure," whether it be in his consumption of food or in his ability to "stand up and take it," is a reminder of and a reproach for her failure as a mother.

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<sup>51</sup> Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.



When the child is old enough to engage in play with others in the neighborhood, the mother's anxiety regarding his success follows him. Success is now evaluated in terms of holding his own in the competitions and conflicts with other children. Her anxious concern now is that he might turn out to be a "sissy." The term *sissy*, Gorer declares, is "a key concept for the understanding of American character."<sup>52</sup> This term is now applied to boys and girls alike, and may in part account for the increasing aggressiveness of American women. The concept of "sissyness" is one of the strong motivating forces in American life and the source of a powerful incentive in American children toward independence and self-assertive behavior.

The fear of their child becoming a sissy is expressed in the parents' valuation of manliness. Since manliness may find expression in undesirable forms of aggression, the child's competitive and aggressive impulses are channelized into socially approved activities. Depending on the age of the child, these activities vary from such forms as Scout membership, "with enormous emphasis on the competition for badges," to success in "dating."<sup>53</sup> The need to assure their children's success in dating is very powerful in American parents, especially in the mother, for it not only guarantees the happiness of their children but reflects their success as parents. Speaking of this phase of parental care, Gorer writes:

This is the final stretch of the competition in which the parents have vicariously engaged since they compared the babies' weights in the hospital; if one's school-girl daughter is in constant demand, is popular, then she has been as well-equipped as is possible; one has been a success as a mother; if she spends too many nights of the week alone, above all if she is forced to spend Saturday nights at home, or with another unfortunate girl, that child has been a failure. . . . Although the father may not participate so directly in the social triumphs of his son as the mother does in those of the daughter, yet he would be even more mortified if his son spent most of his evenings at home, or with other boys similarly unenterprising; for this would be proof that he has been a complete failure as an American father: he would have produced a sissy.<sup>54</sup>

*Ambivalent training.* It is paradoxical but true that while the American family stresses the need for self-assertion and independence, it places great value at the same time upon the irresponsibility

<sup>52</sup> Gorer, *The American People*, p. 85.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. See further, T. Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *Amer. Sociol. Rev.*, 7 (1942), 604-616.



of youth. "Having a good time," especially with members of the opposite sex, is a dominant note in the socialization of the American child.<sup>55</sup> The social conditioning of the child toward aggression is also contradictory. Although aggressiveness is inculcated in children, especially boys, through the sure perception that they must be even more successful than their fathers—which, as Mead points out, means "tougher" than their fathers, an attitude impressed upon them strangely enough by their mothers—they also learn that aggressiveness is wrong though necessary. The ambivalence toward fighting and aggressiveness is resolved, or at least rationalized, by emphasizing their value when performed in self-defense or in beating a bully who has violated the folkway of fair play. The boy should not fight, yet he must be able to stand up for himself and his rights. Aggressiveness and fighting are undesirable qualities; yet they are also necessary when others pick on you or push you around.

Out of this female-imposed maleness there has emerged what Mead thinks is "a special form of aggressiveness; aggressiveness which can never be shown except when the other fellow starts it; aggressiveness which is so unsure of itself that it has to be proved."<sup>56</sup>

#### The Role of Economic Success.

Competition and aggression are closely linked with success, and the success most valued and esteemed is economic. An important part of the American moral code, an aspect of our Puritan-Calvinist tradition, is that a man show his worth by means of hard work, thrift, the accumulation of tangible evidence of success—money. Foreign observers of American life almost unfailingly call attention to the role of money in American life. While it is true that money is very important, it is the success in getting it that is psychologically important. Having no traditional social aristocracy in the United States, we admire the individual who by his own initiative, intelligence, and cunning has achieved economic success. The good man is the man who has made good. The most tangible outward sign of having made good is wealth. The most obvious external sign of having failed is a paucity of worldly goods—of clothes, automobiles, summer vacations at resorts, a "respectable" street address, and membership in the right church. We do not believe that Mead overstates the matter when she asserts—as others have done, notably Kardiner—that worse than breaking the ten commandments is to be in a low economic state, and that failure to keep moving up the ladder of economic success is an unpardonable sin.<sup>57</sup> By a process of ethnocentric identi-

<sup>55</sup> T. Parsons, *op. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>56</sup> Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 151.



fication, the wealth that symbolizes success is also proof that one is a good American.

**Demand for Conformity.** In the days of the great frontier the American was a bold entrepreneur and an individualist. With the accumulation of wealth and a settled economic and social status, the American has developed a new set of folkways and a class-consciousness. Conformity—outward conformity, at all events—is one of his basic moral principles. The good man is not only the man who has made good but who does what all good men do: he follows the Joneses. One of the goals of life is to be loved and accepted. The surest way to attain love and acceptance—and the envy of one's rivals—is to conform as closely as possible to the standards set by others, but to attempt, as Gorer adds, to be a little bit bigger and a little bit better.<sup>58</sup> Nonconformity is a sure proof of difference and hence of inferiority. Accordingly, while Americans take second place to no people in the world for humanity, tolerance, and good will, they cannot easily envisage foreign states of mind and are too insistent on shaping others into their own image. We have been builders of physical things and have not formed the habit of viewing life in terms of human beings. Physical things can be molded into a pattern having stability, whereas human beings are, if permitted, recalcitrant and idiosyncratic. Human beings must, therefore, be reminded of their deviancy by relegation to lower status and inferiority. Americans fear and dislike the black sheep in their midst. Friends of labor, proponents of racial equality, and advocates of free lunches for school children, to mention only a few representative examples, are often suspect, for they challenge the fundamental tenet that goodness consists in making good through one's own labors or through one's own gifts.

**The American Personality.** In view of the ethos of American life, we can formulate a picture of the basic American personality.

The goal-direction of American behavior is success, particularly economic success. Success is probably the greatest single guarantee of security. Accordingly, the typical American is engaged in a nervous drive to get to the top of the heap—or as near to it as possible. By the same token, he is motivated by a neurotic fear of failure. Since success can be achieved only by forthright and aggressive action, he will pursue his goal not only aggressively but often ruthlessly. His aggressiveness is softened, however, by the need to play fair. Ambivalence thus suffuses many aspects of his daily life. The ambivalence feeds upon a conflicting mode of socialization, which

<sup>58</sup> Gorer, *The American People*, p. 187.



demands that a man be aggressive, but only when provoked. He can fight, but he must be sure that it was provoked by another. This attitude has been eloquently demonstrated by his behavior in two world wars. He has fought both intelligently and heroically because of his sure knowledge that he did not start the fight, and that he was not, like an aggressive bully, pushing other nations around.<sup>59</sup> Because of his strong tendency to conform, the American needs justification for his actions. When he knows that others know of his guiltlessness, his devotion to a cause is superb.

The American's conformity is reflected further in his desire to belong and to be accepted. It has been remarked by many observers of the American scene that the American is the greatest of "joiners." He finds his friends and gains acceptance in the Kiwanis, Rotaries, Elks, Lions, and the like. Of these he approves and from them he gets his approval. In these he displays a joviality and enthusiasm that cause dismay or merriment among uninformed observers. The latter fail to see, what Gorer has been quick to discern, that the friendships which the American makes in these groups are based not on congeniality of character but on common interests.<sup>60</sup>

This conformity and identification with various groups exacts its price. The roles which the divergent groups expect the American to act are frequently inconsistent and often vaguely defined. To play the different roles, he has to rationalize, compromise, and experience tension and anxiety. The conflict resulting from divergent claims and loyalties reaches into his moral and economic life. Thus he experiences a psychological cleavage in being unable to reconcile democratic principles and fair play with severe economic competitiveness, circumvention of established rules, including legal principles, and a ruthless struggle to get ahead. Most observers of American behavior, be they clinicians, social scientists, or astute publicists, recognize the divided personality, the marked anxiety, and the inner conflicts which characterize a large segment of the American population. The cleavage is all the more intense because the American can so seldom deeply lose himself in family, class, or nation. On the occasions when such profound identification comes his way, as in a war to save the American way of life, he often emerges from it with cynicism and disillusionment. He is proud of a job well done, but he gains neither personal nor collective integration from his experience. Whether this is due to his attitude that the thing done is less important than doing it—and doing it well—we do not know, but that the integration is lacking there cannot be much doubt.

<sup>59</sup> See Mead, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>60</sup> Gorer, *The American People*, p. 132.



In 1944, in his Presidential Address to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Klineberg expressed optimism regarding the possibility of a "science of national character."<sup>61</sup> Since that time, some excellent work has been done on the problem. We believe that the studies which we have cited in this chapter go far toward making a scientific study of national character—or basic personality, as we prefer to describe it—a reality.

The basic personality is the product of many determining forces, particularly of the ethos, feeling-tone, or *Weltanschauung* of a society. Insofar as every culture has its own peculiar "flavor," or ethos, every individual in a society will, by a process of conditioning and interiorization, take on many of its characteristics in his own attitudes and disposition. Thus, while he will differ in numerous ways from other individuals in his culture, he will also have many traits in common with them. The organization of these common traits into a distinct pattern of attitudes and behavior is the basic personality.

Among the most important aspects of the total culture which mold the basic personality are parental care, particularly the basic disciplines, and the integrational systems. For this reason, a careful study of family organization and functions, socialization in the school, and dominant social and economic institutions is essential to a knowledge of the basic personality of any culture.

We have selected the basic personalities of the Japanese, German, and American cultures because we have, on the whole, more reliable data on the ethos of these countries. Our conclusions on the American personality are the least reliable, for, while we have detailed knowledge of American history to draw upon, which is very helpful, we do not have adequate anthropological data regarding American culture. American culture is so diverse that it is difficult to get a clearly focused view of the essence of American life and manners. Since our perception of basic personality is determined by our perception of the ethos of a society, our psychological picture of the basic American personality is blurred and uncertain.

The studies thus far made of the ethos and the basic personality point to some valuable conclusions. One is that statistical analysis will reveal neither the ethos of a society nor the basic personality of its people. The reason is that *this procedure seldom touches the basic myths upon which a culture rests*. To understand the Japanese idea of the state, for example, it is not enough to know of the hierarchical arrangement of the ruling class, that "Emperor worship" is practiced, etc. More important is a sensitive perception of the myth of the Japanese regarding their national history and their future destiny, their attitude toward shame and humiliation, especially in the eyes of foreigners. Benedict points out that much can be learned from the speeches they make on national holidays.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> O. Klineberg, "A Science of National Character," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 19 (1944), 147-162.

<sup>62</sup> Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 18.



A second important conclusion has been stated by Gillin<sup>63</sup>: in view of the fact that cultures have developed so many different types of personality, the goal of planned personality development is a possibility. From a practical standpoint this conclusion has significant bearing upon what might be done in the "re-education" of the Japanese and the German peoples.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> J. Gillin, "Personality Formation from the Comparative Cultural Point of View," in C. Kluckhohn and H. A. Murray, eds., *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 168.

<sup>64</sup> Since this chapter was written, the writer has read the excellent little book on *Culture and Personality*, edited by S. S. Sargent and M. W. Smith (New York: The Viking Fund, 1949), which throws much needed light on the subject of basic personality. See especially Otto Klineberg's paper "Recent Studies of National Character," including the "Discussion," pp. 127-141.



## CHAPTER 11 :

# Class Status, Occupation, and Behavior

TWO CULTURAL FACTORS which affect human attitudes and conduct are class status and occupation. It is easy to demonstrate that economic status and occupational pursuit determine many of our attitudes and activities. The political party with which we affiliate, the social set in which we move, the college which we attend, the person whom we marry, the church to which we belong—these are in no small measure determined by our class position and our occupation. It is therefore necessary for the student of social psychology to study the economic structure of a society in order to understand the derived class position and occupational attitudes of individuals, and how these in turn affect them as functioning persons in the various reference groups in which their effective interactions take place. Economic activities, class status, and occupation are aspects of the total culture, and consequently a knowledge of their



operation and effect upon the individual are important in the study of the relation between culture and personality.

## Human Nature and the Mode of Production

In our study of various nonliterate cultures we called attention to the importance of the subsistence economy in molding the way of life of a people. Man must everywhere labor, by hoeing his crop, selling his wares, keeping up with a conveyor belt in a factory, or in some other way. In the subsistence economy, in the mode of production which dominates the life of his group, man finds much of his security and safety. The individual as such has little to do with determining the way of making a living, for it is inherent in his culture. He can only adjust to the way open to him on the basis of his intelligence, skill, and capacity to innovate and create. While he has little choice in the mode of making a living, the economic system of which he is a member is a basic factor in molding his personality structure. There is no society of which we have knowledge where the economic system does not fundamentally affect the character of its important institutions and its basic personality. Although the molding influence of the economic structure is more readily discerned when the system of production is being altered or abandoned (recall the change from dry to wet rice cultivation in Tanala-Betsileo), it is constantly affecting and conditioning human attitudes and relations.

**Conditions of Production.** When we say that the mode of production conditions human behavior, we are making a broad statement and calling attention to a very complex process. If we are to trace the effects of the mode of production upon the individual, we must try to reduce the complex process to simpler and more manageable relationships. This consists in spelling out the separate aspects of the total conditioning process.

A comparative analysis of the ways of making a living will show that in all forms of production, whether in nonliterate or secular cultures, there are four conditions under which it takes place, viz., labor, organization of production, raw materials, and techniques.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, the Marxian analysis of production. An acceptance of this analysis, which is essentially correct and realistic, does not commit one to the Marxian position. It is merely to recognize a historical and sociological fact. For a discussion of the conditions of production see V. Venable, *Human Nature: The Marxian View* (New York: Knopf, 1945), chap. vii.



*Labor.* Labor is human activity directed toward the goal of self-maintenance in the material or economic sphere of life. Through labor, man gets a measure of control over the forces of nature and thereby satisfies his needs and assures his survival. Labor is an example of primary goal-integrated behavior; it is purposive behavior in that man is consciously working to achieve a specific end—self-maintenance or survival. Man thus tills the soil, sows seeds, harvests his crop, and pounds it into food to satisfy his needs and vouchsafe his existence.

*Organization of production.* We know of no society in which man labors alone for his own survival. Labor is fundamentally social; it involves the cooperative activities of many individuals. When man works, he enters into a set of relationships with others like himself to achieve certain results. To this end he finds necessary certain forms of social organization, ranging from the mutually cooperative relations of families and tribes to the impersonal relations of trade unions, trusts, corporations, and cartels.<sup>2</sup> Even when men compete with one another in their economic activities, they must cooperate with each other in various ways. Cooperation, or division of labor, is a mark of all forms of economic activity in every society. This division of labor may be based on differences in sex, age, physical strength, mental capacity, skill, and the like. Thus, in most societies men produce the needed food, and so they engage in hunting, fishing, raising crops, or manufacturing commodities which are sold on the market. Women cook, keep house, and rear children. In these activities human beings acquire various psychological characteristics. In hunting, for instance, man must display courage and skill. If he fails in these activities, he may lose status and suffer distress. Man takes on the ways of his job; while he controls it, it also controls him.

*Raw materials.* This category includes all the objects upon which labor is exercised, such as soil, animal life, minerals, and timber.

Unless man could utilize the natural resources of his environment to achieve his end of self-and-group maintenance, he obviously could not survive. Everywhere he must transform the raw materials of his physical environment from nonusable into usable forms.

*Techniques.* Man's transformation of nonusable into usable forms is dependent upon his techniques. These are of an almost endless variety, ranging all the way from the primitive hand-axe to the highly intricate machinery of the modern factory. Modern man's attitudes and activities must differ in significant ways from those of early man

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.



by virtue of the fact that he has invented tools and organized his system of production so intricately that they have molded him into a different creature. In transforming the raw materials around him by his own labor, productive organization and techniques, man has wrought significant changes in himself. By the time we reach contemporary man we find that he is so thoroughly conditioned by his occupational interests that he has specific economic and social statuses, as well as a set of attitudes, mannerisms, and outlook on life peculiar to the nature of his work. There can be little doubt that there is a definite relationship between occupation, class-status, and personality.

**From Handicraft to Mechanization.** In the handicraft system of early times a man's tools were his own; the highly specialized machinery of contemporary manufacturing belongs to a corporation. During the early days man used his own tools to weave his own cloth, to make his own clothes; to till his own soil. He had a fairly clear perception of his goal in this process, was his own master, and had a sense of workmanship and pride in his own achievement. He no doubt felt a degree of creativeness and a heightened emotional satisfaction—a feeling that the finished product had something of himself in it.

With the coming of modern inventions and machine production, labor changed radically, and the set of attitudes induced by the new technology differed considerably from the old. Veblen's trenchant analysis of modern machine production is still the best delineation of the mechanization of modern life and the psychological consequence of its dominant place in Western civilization.<sup>3</sup> He says that the "instinct of workmanship," which gives man a high degree of personal-emotional satisfaction, is largely choked off by the deadening routine of the machine process. The sense of self as a vital part of the productive process is largely absent. The conveyor belt is a living symbol of the repetitive routine of work, and frustration and taut nerves are its psychological symptoms. In place of the individualistic and personal devotion to his work, man is today but a cog in the wheel of a highly impersonal industrial process. The orientation of individuals, like that of things, is mechanical and impersonal, and "the resultant discipline is a discipline in the handling of impersonal facts for mechanical effect."<sup>4</sup> The satisfaction which the worker gets from his job today is derived not from the knowledge of a job well done—for the

<sup>3</sup> T. Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (New York: Scribner, 1904).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.



precision machine will help him to do it superbly—but from the wages he receives and the goods he can buy.

Stating the matter in this fashion is not to succumb, however, to the fallacious view that the machine is all evil. While the machine has unquestionably deprived man of the pleasure of work and diminished his opportunities for creative achievement, it has given him an unparalleled standard of living, leisure, and the comforts and pleasures which come from the possession of material things. Man's values today lie outside the production process itself, in the possessions which his wages bring to him. There is thus an almost complete psychological separation between the job which a man pursues and the fruits of his labor. The significance of this separation for the study of personality is that it supports the thesis that occupation shapes the attitudes and habits of an individual worker. In the shift from the handicraft to the machine system of production, old attitudes and values gave way almost completely to those which are fostered by the impersonal forces of mass production, monotonous work, and pecuniary rewards.

A further consequence of the factory system of production is the deep cleavage it has effected between the employer and the employee. Their conflicts have been costly to both sides in psychological tensions, hatreds, and fears. Because of the circular nature of these emotions, employers and employees have reached a stage where suspicion, aggressiveness, and mutual recriminations are mounting into dangerous proportions. In this highly charged atmosphere neither the worker, manager, nor owner is able to maintain a psychological equilibrium.

The effect of machine production upon individuals may be summarized as follows. By virtue of the repetitive monotony of modern production, most workers become psychologically impoverished. Since their work seldom calls for more than a mechanical manipulation of a minute segment of the total productive enterprise, they have practically no reason or opportunity for developing constructive imagination, inventiveness, and sensitivity to the personal and social value of their labor. Their personalities are fallow and one-sided. Their energies, while directed toward a goal—the goal of doing as little as necessary for as much money as possible—are largely purposeless. On the other hand those individuals responsible for directing the productive enterprise are caught in the narrow groove of their own specialization. They seldom, by virtue of their narrow concentration, comprehend the social implications of their activities, and become insensitive to the needs and aspirations of those over whom they wield



power. The employee and the employer, accordingly, each in his own way, fail to develop their full human potentialities. Neither can fully comprehend or sympathetically appreciate the place of the other in the total productive scheme. The "inhumanness" of modern business or industrial enterprise lies largely in the insensitivity of each to the needs of all, and in the failure to understand that the attitudes and ideals of each are conditioned by the way in which he makes his living.

### Occupational-centrism and Class Alignments

It is not enough to say that the way an individual makes his living conditions his personality. The way in which man makes his living conditions and is conditioned by his class position. To understand man's behavior, therefore, the social psychologist must turn to a study of the class structure of a society. Man is not only a social being but a class-oriented individual. Thus, mode of production and class-membership are co-determinants of human behavior. It is hardly necessary to be a Marxist—although Marx and Engels were pioneers in the study of the class-nature of economic production—to discern that man has been inordinately class-bound. To some extent man has always been a "class animal": freeman or slave, patrician or plebeian, lord or vassal, guildmaster or journeyman, bourgeois or proletarian.<sup>5</sup>

In Western society man's status is determined largely by his class membership. In a society like that of the United States, where people are highly sensitive to the opinions of others in matters of economic possession, economic status plays an enormous role in determining attitudes and interpersonal relations. While class lines are never as sharply drawn in the United States as they are in European society, they are, nevertheless, significant factors in the psychology of the American people. Because the class lines are much more flexible in our society, the "class struggle" as described by the Marxists has never been so intense. Although class loyalties exist and are increasing in the United States, they are much weaker than in most Western societies. Because of the high degree of vertical mobility in American society, there is less class identification. There is, rather, a strong drive in the American worker to climb up the economic

<sup>5</sup> This is, of course, the well-known dichotomization of Marx and Engels by means of which they argue for the thesis of the class struggle. See K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers, 1948) p. 9.



ladder and dissociate himself from his class. Social climbing, therefore, rather than class struggle, characterizes most American workers. If they fail to get out of their class, they will often sacrifice inordinately to enable their children to achieve a higher status. If the Communist party has only a very small membership in the United States, this fact is due not merely to less poverty and more opportunity in America, but to the intense concern with improving one's social status.

Recent studies and surveys of social striving in the United States leave no doubt in one's mind that most Americans are either striving to get out of their class (except those in the highest class, of course) or are unwilling to identify themselves with it. Americans are quick to count those as friends and acquaintances who are higher in the social scale, as if fearing to be placed in a lower class.<sup>6</sup> Gallup and *Fortune* polls of a decade ago disclosed the American's determination either to get out of or reject his class status. The Gallup poll showed that when people were asked to indicate their class position the vast majority placed themselves in the middle class, and only 6 per cent reported themselves as members of the lower class. This self-placing in the middle class is in sharp contrast to the known facts regarding the economic incomes of American families, which show that approximately 60 per cent have incomes which would place them in the lower class—under \$1250 in 1935–1936.<sup>7</sup> A similar survey conducted by *Fortune* revealed that 79.2 per cent of the American people placed themselves in the middle class.<sup>8</sup> Cantril reports an even larger discrepancy. His study shows that 72 per cent of those who placed themselves in the *upper* social class have family incomes of less than \$60 per week.<sup>9</sup>

**The Process of Social Differentiation.** People in every society are differentiated on the basis of some real or assigned characteristics, such as age, sex, special ability, or wealth. The differentiations tend to separate individuals socially or psychologically on the basis of deference, prestige, fear, and the like. Some differentiations are based fundamentally on economic factors and division of labor. These differentiations tend to establish barriers between groups and individuals, and these

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<sup>6</sup> See G. Lundberg and M. Steele, "Social Attraction-Patterns in a Village," *Sociometry*, 1 (1938), 375–419.

<sup>7</sup> American Institute of Public Opinion, *Chicago Daily News*, April 3, 1939.

<sup>8</sup> "The Fortune Survey: xxvii. The People of the U.S.A.—A Self-Portrait," *Fortune*, 21 (1940), 14–28, 133–136.

<sup>9</sup> H. Cantril, "Identification with Social and Economic Class," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 38 (1943), 74–80.



barriers are maintained and perpetuated through agencies which protect and justify certain rights and privileges for the particular group. The process may be called the *class principle*, or the principle of social stratification.

The principle of social stratification is basically social-psychological. It involves, first, a *consciousness of kind*. People who are conscious of themselves as members of a socio-economic group possess a common set of attitudes and values. These attitudes and values make for group solidarity, mutual identification, and similarity of behavior. Thus, the "rich" are conscious of a common identity, and in time of external threat, such as strikes or revolutions, their in-group loyalties and out-group hostilities are intensified.

The principle of social stratification also involves *superordination-subordination*. This consists of an attitude of superiority and domination (superordination) of the upper strata of society toward the lower ones. Psychologically, the attitude of superordination is responsible for the quality of the morale of the members of the group, giving them a sense of security, of pride, or of scorn for those below them—and in the more humane and enlightened group, an attitude of *noblesse oblige*.

Subordination is an attitude of inferiority and submission of the lower strata toward the upper ones. In earlier times, and in many parts of the world at the present time, this attitude was so deeply ingrained in the lower classes that they not only accepted their inferiority but justified it as right and proper in their relation to the upper classes. In Europe, the French Revolution radically weakened this attitude; and in the United States, where it was never strong, it has steadily diminished as a consequence, first, of almost unlimited economic opportunities and, second, because of the growing influence of the labor movement, which has given the lower classes a feeling of security and a sense of dignity.

**The Class System.** Most American children are taught, and grow up with, the idea that all men are created equal. The present generation, moreover, has grown up with the firm conviction of the evils of the Marxist doctrine of a classless society. The average American is thus confused in his understanding of the class-nature of our society. He is led to believe, on the one hand, that there are no classes in the United States, and on the other, that a classless society is an evil Communist dream. The facts are, however, that everyone is born into a class and usually remains in it for the rest of his life. Much of the occupational mobility of the Americans is not upward, as we fondly believe, but between occupations on the same socioeconomic level. Men change jobs; they may rise from unskilled to



skilled workers; a few become clerks and professional people; but their socioeconomic status remains largely the same.<sup>10</sup>

We shall describe and analyze the social classes in the United States, in order to show the effects of class-membership upon the personality of the individual. Sociologists have made various attempts to differentiate classes, but there is none that satisfies everyone. For convenience we shall use the well-known three-fold classification of upper, middle, and lower.<sup>11</sup>

*The upper class.* The upper class in America, as elsewhere, has high status and many privileges. Its members are sometimes referred to as "the 400." Their names appear in the Social Register of our large cities. They belong to the "best" or most exclusive clubs.<sup>12</sup> Many members of the upper class are never employed; their wealth is either inherited or derived from large financial holdings and from profits on production and investment. Employment is more characteristic of the lower-upper class. They are overwhelmingly in professional and proprietary positions. In "Yankee City" over 83 per cent of the lower-upper class are so employed.<sup>13</sup> Economic wealth, however, is not always essential for membership in the upper class. A family of upper-class position for generations may continue in its favored social position even though by high economic standards it may not possess great wealth. Many blue bloods of New England, particularly of Boston, are members of the aristocracy even though when measured by financial standards they may be relatively poor. The same is true of many families in the South. While their standard of living is lower than that of the rich, they continue to enjoy the high social status that goes with their upper-class position.

Typical of upper-class mentality—excluding the blue bloods, who may

<sup>10</sup> See the study of San Jose, California, by P. E. Davidson and H. D. Anderson, *Occupational Mobility in an American Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1937).

<sup>11</sup> Warner claims to have discovered six classes in "Yankee City," a New England community, viz., upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower-lower. See W. L. Warner and P. S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, pp. 81-126.

<sup>12</sup> The upper class of Chicago, members of the "Gold Coast," are well described by Zorbaugh. While the description which he gives is that of the Chicago élite of the late 1920's, there is no adequate reason for believing that they have changed radically, or that his descriptions are not generally valid for the upper-class attitudes and behavior in other parts of the United States. See H. W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

<sup>13</sup> Warner and Lunt, *op. cit.*, p. 423.



live in genteel poverty—is what Veblen called “conspicuous consumption.”<sup>14</sup> Through lavish display and spending the upper-class individual maintains—or if he is still a social climber, playing the “social game” he hopes to attain—social recognition. Knowing the “right people”—or better yet, being related to them by blood or marriage—helps immeasurably in maintaining one’s superordinate position in the social hierarchy.<sup>15</sup>

Because the upper class has a pre-eminent position in the class structure, its members are very sure of themselves socially, well-poised, and psychologically dominant. While they are generally more tolerant than other classes of the foibles and weaknesses of human beings, they are suspicious and contemptuous of those who challenge their moral right to a superordinate and dominant position. This attitude is currently expressed in the antagonisms and conflicts between the “capitalists” and the “laborers.” The upper class today is more conscious of itself than heretofore and looks upon the laborer, in typical in-group fashion, as a threat to upper-class pre-eminence. Accordingly, the upper class is impelled to redouble its efforts to rationalize, and so make acceptable to society, its superordinate position. Of apologists for upper-class domination there is almost no end, and their need to justify themselves in mounting philanthropic activities is conspicuous in contemporary life. Self-interest is, by a process of rationalization, easily transmuted into “service” and the “public good.”

The values of the upper class, like the values of any group, mold the attitudes and behavior of its members. Its social expectancies are powerful psychological devices for creating strong in-group relations. Going against its mores, like flouting the customs of any group, is tantamount to going against itself, and is tolerated as little. Violations of its prescriptions may vary from the boorishness of appearing at dinner without a jacket<sup>16</sup> to “deserting one’s class” by espousing the cause of labor, as the late President Roosevelt was accused of having done.

The values of the upper class mold the behavior of its members in innumerable ways. Generally speaking, a member of the upper class does not marry whom he pleases; his choice is determined not only by the available members of his class but even more by its mores. He is expected to marry someone from his own class. Like people in the lower classes, he does not

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<sup>14</sup> T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Modern Library, 1934). This is the classic treatise on upper-class behavior.

<sup>15</sup> For a revealing discussion of this phenomenon in the South see J. Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 80–81.

<sup>16</sup> Zorbaugh, *op. cit.*



commonly choose the church in which he wants to worship—or more probably on whose roster he wants his name to appear. More likely than not he will be an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian—or if he lives in New England, a Unitarian. It is most unlikely that he will drive—or be driven in—a Chevrolet or Ford; a Cadillac or Lincoln is his most likely choice. He will play golf rather than pool. There is a high probability that his children will go to private schools and “exclusive” colleges. He, and his wife, too, will belong to the “right” clubs. It may be the Casino, the Saddle and Cycle, or the Fortnightly Club.

These distinctions inevitably create a cultural situation which characterizes class distinction everywhere: equality in social relationships is accorded only to members of one's own class.<sup>17</sup> Between themselves and members outside their class social distance is observed, and this social distance increases with the remoteness of the class from one's own. This is especially pronounced in the condescending attitude toward the lower class, many of whom, according to a not uncommon belief, are in their low positions because of intellectual inferiority, lack of ambition, and even a lack of the right religious faith.<sup>18</sup>

*The middle class.* The middle class in the United States is less well-defined than either the upper or the lower classes. This is due in part to the tendency, as we have seen, of a large segment of our population to identify itself with it, and in part to the fact that it is composed of a conglomerate of people pursuing a large variety of occupations. The majority of this class are white-collar workers—people engaged in small-scale production and ownership, salaried and independent professional and business people, supervisory and technical employees in industry, and clerical workers. Although such a heterogeneous group will vary in the attitudes and behavior of its individuals, the dominant and pervasive attitude of these people is their close identification with upper-class interests. This is due largely to their ambition to raise themselves to

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<sup>17</sup> The thesis of social separation and inequality in social relations is further supported by the fact that in most primitive cultures, where social classes do not exist, people meet one another on equal terms. Although individuals differ in prestige, this difference is based on the recognition of abilities and skills. See G. Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), chaps. i-ii.

<sup>18</sup> Roger Babson believes that 95 per cent of the people who are poor materially are in their wretched state because they lack the *religious* qualities of faith, industry, and thrift which have placed the more successful people in their fortunate position. See R. W. Babson, *Religion and Business* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 97-99.



upper-class status and to the fact that their occupation brings them at many points into close association with the individuals and mores of the upper class. In the perennial conflicts between the "capitalists" and the "laborers," therefore, they usually side, often quite emotionally and irrationally, with the upper class.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the social separation of the middle class—primarily the business class—from the ordinary worker, the modern businessman has little or no understanding of the attitudes and needs of the workingman. By virtue of this same separation the workingman has little appreciation of the businessman's outlook, and usually fears and envies him.

The professional segment of the middle class is characterized by the fact that it has no particular set of attitudes which belong to it as a group. Like other segments of the middle class its sympathies and identifications lie largely with the upper classes, for the education of its members attracts them to the "better" class and their income is derived from it. A study of the professional groups in the United States throws considerable light upon the relation between occupation and personality. It will repay us, accordingly, to examine the leading professions in our society and to trace their effects upon the individuals following them.

We shall begin with the *medical profession* because it has almost always stood highest in the prestige scale of professional occupations.<sup>20</sup> The doctor is held in high esteem for several reasons. He impresses people by his long educational and technical training—a training in which he himself takes much pride and which gives him a feeling of self-assurance and competence. Being highly conscious of his profession and its esteem in the eyes of others, he acquires an exaggerated dignity and reserve. "A grave manner is almost as essential to the physician as to the undertaker."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, his prestige is largely bound up with the "mysteriousness of his silent

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<sup>19</sup> It would not be amiss to describe the middle class as being in a state of transition and accordingly of confusion of loyalties. If the Lynds' observations in revisited Middletown is indicative of a trend, as it seems to be, then the middle class is undergoing a split between the "old" group of small-scale manufacturers and merchants and the "new" group of salaried employees of big business. This split, according to the Lynds, has been brought about by the emergence of big business. See R. S. and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), pp. 455-458. See also L. Corey, *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (New York: Covici Friede, 1935).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. F. Wilkinson, "Social Distance between Occupations," *Sociol. Soc. Res.*, 13 (1929), 234-244.

<sup>21</sup> A. E. Briggs, "Social Distance between Lawyers and Doctors," *Sociol. Soc. Res.*, 13 (1928), 156-163.



gravity." This attitude is extremely helpful to the doctor in dealing with his patients, and is an important element in his "bedside manners." The feelings of confidence, self-assurance, and emotional satisfaction which accrue to the doctor by virtue of his occupational prestige must be, even by moderate standards, considerable.

The medical profession is extremely institutionalized. This is due to the standardized training which the profession demands of the prospective doctor, and to the rigidity of the American Medical Association, which demands close adherence to its professional code. By virtue of their domination by the strict codes of the Association, American doctors are overwhelmingly conservative, especially in their professional attitudes and behavior. In the matter of their conservative attitude toward most issues of life, they do not, of course, differ appreciably from other professional groups.<sup>22</sup> It is not difficult to predict with considerable accuracy where a doctor, like other professional people, will stand on various social issues. Once we know the occupational status of an individual, we can reliably predict his radical-conservative attitudes. Centers has even demonstrated that it is sufficient to know the individual's subjective class-placement, and not his objective occupational status, to predict the individual's attitudes of radicalism-conservatism.<sup>23</sup> His occupational pursuits, nevertheless, are bound to shape his attitudes on many problems and issues, both professional and social.

While the doctor is conservative in most things, he is not necessarily conventional in his moral attitudes. We have no adequate empirical confirmation of this assertion, but it is a judgment made frequently by astute observers of the medical profession. His training and his daily contact with the sick sensitizes the doctor to the havoc that sex taboos can wreak upon people, and he is not averse to their violation. Briggs explains this unconventional attitude thus:

Being conscious of the madness by which ignorance of sex tortures the minds and bodies of humans, the doctor, for the sake of what he thinks sanity is, inclines to a different sex morality than prevails in the community. He mouths its hypocrisies when he is forced to speak, but secretly he holds a variant opinion, although his sex conduct may be conventionally proper. Contrary to general

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of radicalism and conservatism among the various occupational groups, see the excellent study: R. Centers, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), especially chap. v.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*



opinion, doctors have an easier morality and therefore less trouble with their consciences than do lawyers.<sup>24</sup>

The most obvious instance of the effect of the medical profession upon the attitudes of doctors is seen in their adherence to their Association's stand on socialized medicine. Almost as a body they voice the belief of the Association that socialized medicine is dangerous, a socialistic scheme, and that the standards of their profession will be adversely affected by it. Thus, although doctors are trained in scientific method, in matters pertaining to their profession they seem to take a partisan rather than an objective view. In this attitude they may also betray individualistic and pecuniary interests, which are not consistent with their avowed humanitarian principles.

Our concern in this matter is not with the rightness or wrongness of socialized medicine, but with the set of attitudes concerning it. We are trying to show that a doctor thinks as he does, has the attitudes that he has, and behaves as he does because he is a doctor—a member of a group of individuals whose personalities are influenced by their class alignment and their occupational pursuit.

We shall now consider another leading profession of our society, the *legal profession*. Inasmuch as lawyers belong to the same social class as physicians, they have similar attitudes. Nevertheless, because their professional training is different and because their professional work brings them into contact with a different kind of people, they develop their distinctive attitudes toward the world.

The legal world is dominated by precedent. In deciding on a case before him, the lawyer is greatly influenced by past decisions. He develops the habit of looking backward, of revering tradition. He has excessive confidence in the legal rules, which too often he fails to remember are man-made and reflect human frailties and limitations.

At the same time the experienced lawyer, who is also probably familiar with the circumventions of legal precedent by bold and constructive jurists in the past, knows that the rules are often illusory. "No rule," says Frank, "can be proof against the subjectivity inherent in fact-finding. Ordinarily the human element in judging cannot be escaped by resort to legal rules."<sup>25</sup> The juristic mind is thus dualistic, adamantly holding on to precedent, yet readily succumbing, if winning the case is impossible by traditional means, to "the take-a-chance attitude" toward litigation.<sup>26</sup> This duality may be

<sup>24</sup> Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 162. Reprinted by permission of *Sociology and Social Research*.

<sup>25</sup> J. Frank, *Courts on Trial* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 328-329.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.



one source of the widespread belief that lawyers are crafty and dishonest, people whom one can seldom trust.

By virtue of the fact that the lawyer is a defender of precedent and of the *status quo*, and because he has played a vital role in the structuring and defense of existing institutions, he seems to have developed an exaggerated image of his own importance. He banks his prestige upon his role in the development of our "sacred" institutions. His inflated self-image is expanded further by his sure recognition of the "majesty of the law" and by what Frank so well describes as "the cult of the robe."<sup>27</sup> This is more especially true of the judge of the court. The judge's robe signifies that the past is sacred and that change is evil. It informs the public that "what has heretofore been done must be right; improvements, and experimentation in novelties are always unwise; the populace must never profanely seek to modify inherited customs and institutions."<sup>28</sup> The whole judicial procedure in the courts aims to convey the idea that judges are infallible, for they are the living symbols of an impersonal "higher law." It is only natural that the judge should agree with this flattering view of himself and to be influenced by it in forming his image of himself. His status and prestige are derived from the sanctity of the law, and the judicial robe is a concrete affirmation of his infallibility, his right to a privileged position, and his immunity from honest criticism.

Briggs points out that the lawyer is an "engineer of social structures and processes," and that he has been "prominent in social leadership."<sup>29</sup> This is true of only a small number, the jurists of great wisdom and humanity; it is far from true of the majority of lawyers. In matters of social policy, in the grasp of the important social and psychological problems of the day, on the question of the enhancement of the common good, the lawyer does not differ essentially from others in his socioeconomic class. Legal practices and judicial decisions are determined to a great extent by the attitudes of the lawyer. Economic factors, as we have shown, affect the mores of a group; the mores of the group affect the lawyer in his opinions and decisions. Since lawyers are identified with the economically superior class, this class-loyalty shapes the legal rules and influences his decisions and interpretations.<sup>30</sup>

In his morals, according to Briggs, the lawyer is unlike the doctor. The lawyer is conventional in both his moral attitudes and behavior. "Group

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254-261.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>29</sup> Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> This is not Marxian dogma but a statistical fact. See J. Frank, *op. cit.*, p. 344.



morality," writes Briggs, "is the instinctive attribute of the lawyer . . . He is as the others are, and his is a representative morality."<sup>31</sup> In all other respects, too, the lawyer is conventional and generally conservative.

We shall now turn to a consideration of the *teaching profession*. The teacher is frequently idealized, although his status in the eyes of the public is seldom congruent with the exalted picture that is often painted of him by nostalgic individuals. Actually he does not have a high status in our society. His position is one of subservience and conformity. Most of the regulations by means of which his attitudes and behavior are controlled are designed to effect his conformity with the mores of the community and the prejudices of local school boards, principals, superintendents, and parents. Where these prejudices conflict, the teacher must do his best to live in accordance with them without making his own attitudes and ideas known.

The inferior social status of the teacher is in no small way conditioned by his low economic position. The average income of schoolteachers does not compare favorably with that of laborers. In a national survey of teachers' salaries, based on U.S. Office of Education figures for the year 1944-1945, Littell found that approximately half of the nation's 850,000 teachers received less than \$1800; 200,000 received less than \$1200; and 25,000 less than \$600.<sup>32</sup>

The inferior status of the American teacher is also due to his inferior training. In terms of educational and professional qualifications, the teacher compares poorly with people in other professions. The academic standards of teachers' colleges are generally inferior to those of other colleges and professional schools. The professional standards of the teaching profession are seldom as rigorous as those of the other well-known professions, and the licensing of teachers in most states leaves much to be desired, although both teacher education and licensing standards are generally improving.<sup>33</sup> The poor education and the inferior professional standards are almost bound to convey the idea to the public that teachers are recruited from the less superior and capable segment of the American population. This state of affairs lends support in the public mind to George Bernard Shaw's well-known quip, that "those who can, do; those who can't, teach."

<sup>31</sup> Briggs, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>32</sup> R. Littell, "Teachers' Pay—A National Disgrace," *Reader's Digest*, 47 (1945), 82-92.

<sup>33</sup> See W. S. Elsbree, *The American Teacher* (New York: American Book, 1939), chap. xiv. See also F. E. Bolton and J. E. Corbally, *Educational Sociology* (New York: American Book, 1941).



There is still another reason for the inferior status of the schoolteacher in America. In a nation like ours, where aggressiveness and adventurousness are virtues and the fear of being a sissy is pronounced, a man is inclined to avoid an occupation which might stigmatize him as effeminate. School-teaching is predominantly a woman's occupation. It does not challenge, as does business, medicine, or law, a man's best efforts. Being generally less submissive than women in our culture, a man is loath to accept the restrictions which teaching imposes upon individuals. That the man's attitude regarding the effeminacy of teaching is irrational may be admitted by an impartial observer, but the stubborn fact is that many men are dissuaded from the teaching profession for the aforementioned reason.

The American teacher is seldom an individualist. More than any other professional people, the teacher is in most respects a meek conformist. If he is not meek before he begins his career, he soon becomes so; but failing in this, he is foredoomed to disciplinary action and ultimate denial of re-appointment. He must conform with the mores of the community. This may consist of anything from not smoking or dancing to refraining from joining a teachers' union. He dare not teach anything controversial, and he becomes extremely circumspect in expressing his opinions both in the classroom and out of it. Any suspicion of radicalism, such as a sympathetic attitude toward labor's conflict with capital, may be enough to elicit a severe reprimand or even dismissal.<sup>34</sup>

This repressive attitude toward teachers reached a new low when a "red rider" to an appropriation bill for the District of Columbia schools in 1935 forbade the mentioning of Communism in the classroom. While the bill, after vehement protest, was repealed, it nevertheless shows the lengths to which public officials will go to demand conformity of the individual teacher.<sup>35</sup>

This demand for conformity is not confined to the public schools, but also reaches into colleges and universities, especially if they are publicly supported. In 1940 the courts of New York City refused an appointment to Bertrand Russell, the brilliant and well-known British philosopher, to teach logic in the College of the City of New York because of the unconventional views on marriage which he expounded in his book *Marriage and Morals*.<sup>36</sup> At this writing the dismissals of professors at the University of California for their unwillingness to sign a so-called loyalty oath is but the latest and

<sup>34</sup> See H. K. Beale, *Are American Teachers Free?* (New York: Scribner, 1936).

<sup>35</sup> "The Little Red Rider," *School and Society*, 43 (1936), 513.

<sup>36</sup> "Behind the Russell Case," *The Nation*, 150 (1940), p. 436.



one of the most glaring expressions of the demand for teachers' conformity with the dominant prejudices of our time.<sup>37</sup>

Because of the low esteem in which teachers are held in our society they develop little *esprit de corps*. Out of submission and fear they do not ordinarily act as a body, and they are seldom well-organized professionally. Unlike the laborer, who has attained a considerable measure of independence through organization, the teacher is timid and does not acquire an attitude of confidence in and respect for his own profession. He has reached the position where he has accepted the current rationalization by the public that the teacher, because he greatly influences children, *ought* to conform lest he influence children adversely.

In this suppressive atmosphere the teacher has almost no opportunity to develop his own individuality. Though he may inwardly grumble, he rarely extrverts his feelings and attitudes sufficiently to effect important changes. The resulting docility becomes so pervasive that he reaches a point where he no longer has any ideas of his own. This condition is probably in great part responsible for the belief of many teachers that "academic freedom" is not a problem. They seldom question existing prejudices, and this gives them a spurious sense of being free in their thinking and action. In their automatic conformity with the folkways of the educational system and of the community, they no longer feel a sense of deprivation. They feel inferior and devoid of that forcefulness and courage which alone in the long run can surmount the barriers which rob them of their self-respect. This is the price they pay for being teachers in America.<sup>38</sup>

*The lower class.* The lower class is the other extreme of the social scale from the upper class. Here belongs the so-called laboring group: wage earners in industry, low-salaried workers, most farmers, farm laborers, servants, and the unemployed on relief. We are concerned in this section with the large body of industrial workers in America. This body of workers includes no less than half the adult population of the United States.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For a brief review of the University of California's action, see M. Radin, "The Loyalty Oath at the University of California," *Bull. Amer. Assoc. Univ. Prof.*, 36 (1950), 237-248. The Board of the University has since reversed its stand.

<sup>38</sup> We leave wholly untouched the problem of personality maladjustment, which is a serious one, especially with women teachers in our primary and secondary schools. The large number of emotionally unstable and neurotic schoolteachers in our society is alarming and has been discussed by various writers at different times.

<sup>39</sup> Confusion easily arises in this classification. Not all students of the class structure accept the above meaning of lower class. Centers, for example, distinguishes between



The lower-class individual is conscious of himself as an individual who is a manual worker, who gets a low income, and who is generally being exploited by the capitalists. In a not inconsiderable segment of this class the individual's feeling of being exploited is so intense as to constitute what Miller calls an "oppression psychosis."<sup>40</sup> It is an attitude of resentment and bitterness resulting from low status and an underprivileged position which the worker with much good reason but also with considerable bad logic attributes largely to the upper class. The worker thus bears strong antagonism against the rich. Since class status determines opportunities, the worker feels that the upper class not only deprives him of an adequate income but of most of the satisfactions which income can demand. Statistics bear him out regarding most of his complaints. There are wide differences in the United States in the health, comfort, intelligence, educational opportunities, and the like of the two extremes of the class hierarchy.

The easy and pernicious claim that these differences, especially intelligence, are inborn has been thoroughly discredited by the facts. There has been much evidence amassed in the last decade which shows that the lower intelligence and inferior education of the lower class are products of class differentials. In a report presented to the Educational Testing Service, Dr. Ernest A. Haggard, of the University of Chicago, declared that modern intelligence tests are biased against children of the lower social and economic groups.<sup>41</sup> Many recent studies have shown that there are no differences in the inheritance of mental abilities in different social classes. If children of the low-income groups give inferior performance on intelligence tests, it is because these tests favor the well-to-do, who are better fed and housed, have better medical care, and greater educational and cultural opportunities than the children of the lower class. Haggard called attention to the role of nutritional deficiencies on the nervous system and other bodily tissues which affect performance on tests. He adds that "the recipients of such handicaps are characteristically found in the lower socioeconomic groups." Consequently he asserts:

If . . . a lower class child were perfectly "normal" at birth he may, because of various factors which impede normal development, actually be subnormal by the time he is of testable age. But perhaps more important is the emotional

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the "working class" and the "lower class." In this division the lower class is very small, only about 1 to 5 per cent of the population being placed in it. The chief criterion for membership, according to Centers, is poverty. See R. Centers, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>40</sup> H. A. Miller, *Nations, Races and Classes* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1942).

<sup>41</sup> Reported in *The New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1949, p. 50.



deadening, the development of mental callouses, the disinterest in life and the loss of willingness to respond to it, that often accompanies severe deprivation.<sup>42</sup> Thus intelligence, like attitudes and other aspects of personality, is greatly affected by class relations.

Some effects of economic factors, particularly the degree of security, can be discovered early in the personalities of children. An early study of this relationship is that of Gesell and Lord with nursery-school children.<sup>43</sup> The children in one school came largely from the homes of professional people, whereas those from a second school had working mothers who left the care of their children to the nursery school. The children in each school were rated on their behavior on a scale of low, average, high, and superior. The behavior items included such traits as cooperativeness, poise, self-care, play initiative, and spontaneity of speech. The differences between the two groups of children on these items were noticeable and rather consistent, showing that "winnowing had begun," and that the psychological differentials of later adult life were already conditioning the child in his early years. Specifically, children of the professional parents rated superior particularly on the traits of poise, spontaneity of speech, and play initiative; whereas children from the poorer homes rated superior on the trait of self-care.

The student will take note, of course, that it is not a vague condition like "economic status" which produces such differences as the foregoing. Economic status or economic class is always an abstraction. What leads to certain psychological consequences is the existence of specific factors, such as hunger, nutritional deficiencies, lack of toys and automobiles, poor housing conditions, and family conflicts and disturbances. Because of these factors, the child feels the stings of poverty, deprivation, and social rejection. The feeling of insecurity in an adult worker may not be a consequence of his low income and low-prestige occupation alone, but a resultant also of an impoverished childhood.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* Reprinted by permission of *The New York Times*. For further confirmation of the above assertions see the following excellent studies: W. Allison Davis and R. J. Havighurst, *Father of the Man* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947); H. G. Gough, "The Relationship of Socio-Economic Status to Personality Inventory and Achievement Test Scores," *J. Educ. Psychol.*, 37 (1946), 527-540; N. R. Maddy, "Comparison of Children's Personality Traits, Attitudes, and Intelligence with Parental Occupation," *Genet. Psychol. Monog.*, 27 (1943), 3-65.

<sup>43</sup> A. Gesell and E. E. Lord, "Psychological Comparison of Nursery School Children from Homes of Low and High Economic Status," *J. Genet. Psychol.*, 34 (1927), 554-557.

<sup>44</sup> For some of the effects of poor housing alone see L. Kanner, *Child Psychiatry* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1935) and E. S. Chapin, "An Experiment on the Social Effects of Good Housing," *Amer. Sociol. Rev.*, 5 (1940), 868-879.



Because the laborer suffers from his underprivileged position and feels bitter at the exploitative character of his working relations, he has developed an intense class-consciousness. The growth of labor unions in the United States in the past decades is to no small extent due to the growth of *esprit de corps* and class-consciousness among the workers. For this reason, among others, the American worker tends to be radical, particularly on political and economic issues, in contrast to the upper-class individual who is usually conservative, if not reactionary. Centers's findings in this connection show that the issue between "individualism" and "collectivism," particularly, is becoming the symbol of a sharply drawn class antagonism. He writes:

Whereas nine-tenths of large business owners and managers and over three-fourths of professional and small business men cling to the traditional belief that the role of government should be limited to the insuring of good opportunities for the individual's pursuit of his own economic destiny, only about three-tenths of semi-skilled and unskilled workers profess such a conviction. Fully two-thirds of the workingmen in each of these strata display a socialist or collectivist view in their assertion that it is the government's function to guarantee the citizen's economic sufficiency. Individualism is a crumbling faith.<sup>45</sup>

Class alignments and occupational-centrism play a significant role in determining attitudes and influencing personality. His class membership and his occupation impose certain modes of thinking and behaving upon the individual from which he cannot easily free himself. They erect social and psychological barriers between him and members of other groups, for they involve differences in life organization, outlook, interest, and conduct. Bogardus describes the separation which occupations cause between individuals as "occupational distance," and refers to "the degree of sympathetic understanding existing between the members of any two occupations."<sup>46</sup> Occupational distance, however, cannot be sharply distinguished from class distance, the social separation arising from differences in class membership. Knowledge of either the occupation or the class identification of an individual is generally sufficient for an accurate prediction concerning his attitudes and beliefs, particularly conservatism and radicalism. The degree of conservatism and radicalism is in turn a fairly reliable index of class alignment and occupation.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Centers, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

<sup>46</sup> E. S. Bogardus, "Occupational Distance," *Sociol. Soc. Res.*, 13 (1928), 73-81.

<sup>47</sup> There are, of course, notable exceptions to the above, as when a wealthy intellectual becomes a Communist. Such an exception does not in itself constitute an invalidation of the conclusion.



## Unemployment and Personality

Since occupation affects the personality in many ways, what happens to an individual when, as a consequence of a widespread economic depression and protracted general unemployment, he loses his job? It should be recalled here that having an occupation, making good on the job, and supporting oneself in gainful employment are vital aspects of the pattern of individual success in the United States. Anything which frustrates the individual in his pursuit of economic success threatens his security and makes serious inroads on his personal and social adjustments. Since his standard of living is an important symbol of his success, any threat to its continuance becomes a threat to his self-respect. Unemployment, or the fear of unemployment, may thus have grave consequences for his self. Since the world-wide depression of the 1930's sociologists and psychologists have made some significant investigations into the problem of the effect of unemployment upon the personality. We shall now examine some of their data and conclusions.

**Insecurity.** Insecurity haunts the masses of workers even in normal times, but during prolonged unemployment it is intensified and spreads through other classes. Insecurity is usually the first significant consequence of the loss of one's job.<sup>48</sup> This insecurity arises and grips the individual even though he may realize that his unemployment is no fault of his own. He tends to feel guilty about his unemployment, as Young points out, and to develop a sense of individual inferiority, as if his plight were due to some individual defect or limitation. The fact that it may be society's and not his fault does not extenuate his sense of inadequacy. The sense of insecurity spreads quickly to members of his family, and his fears are proportionally intensified. Not infrequently his family may blame him for the loss of his job, and be impatient with his failure to find another one quickly. While he is unemployed, he still has to eat, have a coat on his back, and a roof over his head. Bills accumulate and creditors become more persistent. His fears increase and he contemplates the future fearfully. He has been deprived of one of the strongest props to security and self-esteem.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> See K. Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), p. 568.

<sup>49</sup> There are several good studies dealing with this and other effects of unemployment on personality. See the following: R. C. Angell, *The Family Encounters the Depression* (New York: Scribner, 1938); E. W. Bakke, *Citizens without Work* (New Haven: Yale



**Loss of Status.** We have seen that the need to maintain, if not to enhance, one's status is important for every self. In the United States status is derived to an inordinate degree from economic success. Economic or occupational status is thus an extremely important value in American life. When this status is threatened by unemployment, the individual's position in the community, and often in the family, is dangerously undermined. Without status, he has no prestige; and without prestige, life begins to lose its former value.<sup>50</sup> Thus, men accustomed to feeling secure in the eyes of others are overwhelmed in their own eyes by the realization that they cannot maintain their former standard of living. The situation is exacerbated by the erroneous American belief that abilities are always adequately rewarded. Adverse reflection on an unemployed man's ability is further encouraged by the fact that, when his status is lost, discouragement depletes his initiative and energy, and he gives the impression of a man devoid of ambition and resourcefulness.

**Resignation.** After prolonged unemployment accompanied by constant self-depreciation, individuals become apathetic and hopeless. The writer knew an unemployed teacher during the depression who had reached a state of utter resignation. He had been unemployed for a year but did occasional odd jobs for slight remuneration. He spent most of his time looking for work and waiting for the daily mail in the hope of getting a teaching appointment. After a year, he gave up in despair and applied for unemployment relief. He was a picture of dejection and total unconcern about his status. His attitude and behavior conformed to a great extent to what Maier has called "behavior without a goal."<sup>51</sup>

University Press, 1940); P. Eisenberg and P. F. Lazarsfeld, "The Psychological Effects of Unemployment," *Psychol. Bull.*, 35 (1938), 358-390; M. Komarovsky, *The Unemployed Man and His Family* (New York: Dryden, 1940); M. Lazarsfeld-Jahoda and H. Zeisl, "Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal," *Psychologische Monog.*, 5 (1933); P. F. Lazarsfeld, "An Unemployed Village," *Charact. & Person.*, 1 (1932), 147-151; E. A. Rundquist and R. F. Sletto, *Personality in the Depression: A Study in the Measurement of Attitudes* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1936); B. Zawadzki and P. F. Lazarsfeld, "The Psychological Consequence of Unemployment," *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 6 (1935), 224-251.

<sup>50</sup> It needs to be emphasized that our description holds largely only for those individuals who have had steady work and a "respectable" place in their community. There is little evidence that marginal people and those near the border of poverty lose much through unemployment, for "one degree worse does not hold many extra burdens." See D. S. Thomas, *Social Aspects of the Business Cycle* (New York: Knopf, 1927), p. 85.

<sup>51</sup> N. R. F. Maier, *Frustration: The Study of Behavior without a Goal* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949). It should be noted that we say that his behavior conformed to a



The attitude of resignation is in effect a loss of morale, of enthusiasm, of faith in oneself. It is manifested in a generally depressed mood, in distrust of others, and in an exaggerated pessimism regarding the possibility of finding a job. It is not the lack of a job, however, but the intense feeling of insecurity that it engenders which is the immediate source of the deep discouragement.

In the final stages of resignation there is a general constriction of activities and interests. Activities which at one time were enjoyable have lost their attraction, and the person's whole outlook on life changes. Even the individual's wants and needs are narrowed, thus reducing the impulses which normally lend zest to his daily living.<sup>52</sup>

**Change in Moral Attitudes.** Data on the effect of unemployment on moral character are scarce and inconclusive. A few facts and some tentative conclusions, however, suggest that unemployment has at least a slight effect on moral attitudes. Williams, in a nonquantitative study of this problem, found a correlation between unemployment and sexual deviancy. His belief is that idleness and emotional tension result in a lowering of individual and social controls and a tendency to indulge in unacceptable sexual practices.<sup>53</sup> In some cases excessive drinking becomes an escape from the tortures of insecurity, anxiety, and loss of status.<sup>54</sup> There is an increase in desertion, especially in families that were already deficient in morale and integration before the onset of unemployment.<sup>55</sup>

**Mental Disorder.** As in the case of the effects of unemployment on morality, knowledge of the relationship between unemployment

... great extent, but not entirely, to behavior without a goal. He had frequent outbursts of anger and indignation, indicating that his behavior was not one of *complete* resignation. As Allport has said, some people are tied to life only by indignation, but even this indignation can be sufficient to prevent complete demoralization and disorganization. See G. W. Allport, *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: Holt, 1937), p. 219.

<sup>52</sup> See Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 364-365, and Zawadzki and Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>53</sup> J. M. Williams, *Human Aspects of Unemployment and Relief* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1933).

<sup>54</sup> E. S. Swerdloff, "The Effect of the Depression on Family Life," *The Family*, 13 (1933), 310-314.

<sup>55</sup> See Angell, *op. cit.*; M. H. Erickson, "Some Aspects of Abandonment, Feeble-mindedness, and Crime," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 36 (1930), 758-769; E. R. Groves, "Adaptations of Family Life," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 40 (1934), 772-779; S. A. Stouffer and P. F. Lazarsfeld, *Research Memorandum on the Family in the Depression*, Bull. 29 (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1937).



and mental disorder is meager. A study by Wells, however, shows that unemployment can lead to psychosis. His conclusion is based on a series of case histories of unemployed individuals.<sup>56</sup> If we include in the category of mental disorder various minor maladjustments, the relationship is probably more close. Many of the traits which we have mentioned are exaggerated and have a deleterious effect upon the individual and his adjustments to others. Thus, the distressing irritability, aggressiveness, anxiety, feelings of inferiority, etc., are aggravated by unemployment and impair the individual's capacity for adjustment and effective living.<sup>57</sup>

#### Some Effects of Unemployment on Children and Adolescents.

Studies show that children and youth are adversely affected when there is unemployment in their homes. Because they are in the most impressionable period of their lives, unemployment in the home may have permanent effects. Unlike their parents, who because of their experience and maturity are able to recover from the crisis of unemployment, the growing child and youth may carry the psychological scars of insecurity and inferiority for the rest of their days. In addition to the narrowed outlook on life resulting from malnutrition and deprivation, they suffer more specific effects. They are often emotionally unstable, and their behavior is frequently marked by excessive irritability, hypersensitivity, resentfulness, and truancy. "Nervousness" and psychosomatic complaints are frequently reported.<sup>58</sup>

Unemployed youths suffer even more in some ways than the children of unemployed parents. Since the need for emancipation from parental control and the desire for independence is very strong in late adolescence, the young unemployed person feels the effect of his position very keenly. A marked tendency to drift aimlessly has been noted with great frequency.<sup>59</sup> Rundquist and Sletto have found various forms of maladjustment and particularly a vacancy and hopelessness regarding the youth's outlook on the future.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the adolescent experiences the same emotional distress and dejection as the adult, but because of his youth he is less capable

<sup>56</sup> F. L. Wells, "Social Maladjustments: Adaptive Regression," in C. Murchison, ed., *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1935).

<sup>57</sup> See Zawadzki and Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-244.

<sup>58</sup> M. Dunn, "Psychiatric Treatment of the Effects of the Depression: Its Possibilities and Limitations," *Ment. Hyg.*, 18 (1934), 279-286; H. C. Schumaker, "The Depression and Its Effect on the Mental Health of the Child," *Ment. Hyg.*, 18 (1934), 287-293.

<sup>59</sup> G. K. Pratt, *Morale: The Mental Hygiene of Unemployment* (New York: National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1933).

<sup>60</sup> Rundquist and Sletto, *op. cit.*



of mastering their effects and is more prone to suffer permanent psychological injury. During the peak depression years in the United States boys and girls, already in conflict with their parents by reason of the latter's unemployment, became extremely rebellious and left their homes in large numbers to become irresponsible drifters and veritable tramps.<sup>61</sup>

Stouffer and Lazarsfeld call attention to the conflicts between youth and parents as a consequence of unemployment. Loss of parental authority is a frequent result, particularly with the daughter, who is even less likely than the son to be employed during a depression. The father's authority is more readily undermined when he is unemployed and the mother supports the family.<sup>62</sup> This agrees with Angell's findings in a slightly earlier study.<sup>63</sup> Angell found a frequent exchange of roles in the family, the mother being able to find work and the father being forced to stay at home and keep house. This change in the roles of the parents frequently had unpleasant effects on the children in that they tended to defy the father's authority.

Some attention, finally, must be given to the affect of family unemployment on the education of children. Several good European studies of this problem, as summarized by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, show that the schoolwork of children is adversely affected by the unemployment of parents.

It has been found that the school marks of children of unemployed parents drop significantly. This drop is substantiated when we note that it occurs more frequently in children who previously had good marks than in those who had average and inferior grades. The decline, moreover, begins immediately after the parents' loss of work, and is therefore due to the lowering of the standards of living. In one fairly well-controlled group in which 473 children from unemployed families were compared with 1,154 children of employed parents, it was found that there was without exception an average drop in the grades of the children of the unemployed group. The adverse effect of unemployment was greater for girls than for boys. After three or four years of the fathers' unemployment there appeared another decline in the children's grades. Particularly significant is the fact that the higher the grades at the beginning of the investigation the greater was the descent. The marks of the younger pupils dropped more than those of the older ones. Teachers, welfare workers, and doctors agree that the

<sup>61</sup> T. Minehan, *Boy and Girl Tramps of America* (New York: Farrar, 1934).

<sup>62</sup> Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> Angell, *op. cit.*



unemployment of parents has a bad effect on the scholastic achievements of children.<sup>64</sup>

On the basis of their investigations of numerous studies of the relation between family unemployment and schoolwork, Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld summarize the specific causes of the decline of children's grades. These are as follows: (1) Because of the poorer health of children of the unemployed, their efficiency is considerably lowered and interferes with their steady attendance in school, whereby they receive less instruction. (2) Emotional disturbances, which are more numerous and severe in unemployed families, prevent the child from exerting his best attention and effort to his schoolwork. (3) Frequently unemployed parents, largely because of their own irritability, give the child less help with his schoolwork. (4) The younger children are more adversely affected than the older ones because they are less able to adjust themselves to their impoverished condition and because they are emotionally more dependent upon their parents. Girls suffer more than boys, probably for the same reasons, as well as because they tend generally to take their schoolwork more seriously.<sup>65</sup>

## Conclusion

Our discussion and review of some of the literature on the subject of class membership and occupational status have emphasized the growing recognition by social psychologists and other students of human behavior that the class and occupational positions of an individual in the socioeconomic hierarchy are important variables in conditioning his total personality. Traits such as dominance, extraversion, introversion, and emotional stability vary with class affiliations. The conflicts and maladjustment of personality can be partially explained by class position. This is all the more true in view of the fact that socialization, i.e., the process of child-rearing, varies with class position and occupation, so that the personality which emerges from the techniques of child training will be significantly conditioned by class position.<sup>66</sup> The differences between the classes are reflected in the personalities of their members.

While the studies which we have cited in this chapter, as well as others, support our hypothesis that the personality structure is clearly molded by class and occupation, there is need for much more empirical investigation to substantiate

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<sup>64</sup> Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 381-382.

<sup>66</sup> See A. Davis, "Child Training and Social Class," in R. G. Barker, *et al.*, eds., *Child Behavior and Development* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943), pp. 607-620.



the claim that specific clusters of traits are derived from class membership. Unless we bear this in mind, it becomes an easy habit to claim that once an individual's place in the socioeconomic scale has been determined his total personality can be safely inferred. Social psychology is as yet in no such fortunate position. The correlations which we have found must be accepted as tentative, subject to modification or even rejection, until further experimental data are available. Meanwhile the student can accept with confidence the validity of the claim that economic position and occupation play important roles in determining attitudes and behavior.



## CHAPTER 12 :

# The Role of Secondary Institutions

IN OUR DISCUSSION of the role of the family, we were describing the institution which plays the most important part in shaping the personality of the individual. The family is described by sociologists as a primary group, or primary institution. An institution is a unit of social organization and consists of a body of values which inform an individual how he must satisfy his needs. An institution is thus a code of behavior imposed on the individuals of a group which makes for a certain uniformity in their behavior. It structures, coordinates, or integrates the behavior of people, makes for a certain degree of invariancy and hence of prediction of their conduct. The primary institutions, particularly the family, have everywhere served the function of molding personality, controlling behavior, and transmitting the social heritage from generation to generation.



It is necessary now to turn to some of the secondary institutions of society. While the contacts and interactions in these institutions lack the direct and intimate character of the primary institutions, they nevertheless play an important role in shaping the attitudes and behavior of people. The secondary institutions are such forms of social organization as the school, church, state, and economic groups. In this chapter we shall examine two secondary institutions, the school and the church, and trace their effects on the personality. The church and the school probably influence the personality more than any other secondary institutions. A large number of children in the United States are sent to church—i.e., Sunday School—at an early age, and all normal children spend many of their formative years in school. Although the primary institution of the family will already have deeply influenced the child's personality before he reaches the age when the school and the church begin to play their roles in shaping his attitudes and conduct, these secondary institutions are nevertheless important factors in the child's growth toward maturity. Both the school and the church will reinforce many of the reactions which were already established in the home, but they will also create new ones. Each in numerous ways reproduces familial patterns, but the reproduction is never exact. Each institution has its own mores, creates new problems, and demands new adjustments. To the extent that this is true, the child's personality will be affected by each. For this reason the student of social psychology must give serious attention to their role in the child's development.

### The American School System

"Nothing, perhaps," says Laski in describing American education, "is more heroic in the American tradition than faith in education and the passion to secure it."<sup>1</sup> This does not mean, of course, that most people in the United States have more than a few years of elementary school education, but the enthusiasm for it is almost universal. Here, as in other areas of life, the economic factor acts as a selective agent, and prevents many who desire and would profit from more education from attaining it. It is well known that children in large families, because of the economic factor, leave school earlier than those in small families. Children of many immigrant groups tend to quit school earlier, and it may be true that the Catholic child leaves earlier than the Protestant child.<sup>2</sup> But these

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Laski, *The American Democracy* (New York: Viking, 1948), p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.



are the consequences of hard economic realities and do not reflect on the passion for education which characterizes the majority of the American people. Since children are either the victims or beneficiaries of this passion for education through the American school system, it is necessary to study its institutional organization, teacher-pupil relationships, and the child's adjustment to the learning process.<sup>3</sup>

**The Organization of the American School.** A school system inescapably reflects the pattern of the dominant institutions of a society. Thus, in Japan and Germany the school systems are patterned largely on the military idea, with exaggerated emphasis (from the point of view of our culture) upon rigid discipline, fear of authority, and unquestioned acceptance of official dogma.

Numerous writers on the American school system have discerned distinct patterns of organization and function. However, Laski is not sure that the American school system is a system at all. He observes that there are schools "so magnificent that both their architecture and equipment take one's breath away." There are also schools, he points out, that are "so mean and pitiful, usually in the South and most often deemed good enough for Negro children, that even some of the blacklisted schools of London are admirable by comparison."<sup>4</sup> There are schools in which principals, supervisors, and teachers are a functioning team that stimulates students to unusual intellectual effort; and there are others in which the whole system breeds apathy and weariness by its deadly and unimaginative routine. Some schools are administered by wise and progressive, even experimentally-minded, school boards and superintendents; others are run by people who have little or no grasp of the problems of the school, teaching, learning, and the relations of these to the vital issues of contemporary life.

Which of these two systems dominates the American school? A limited survey of the enormous quantity of literature on the American school system, and an impartial examination of the degree of its success in preparing children and youth to understand and cope with the changing problems of life, leads one to the sad conclusion that on the whole the forces of obscurantism and reaction are in the saddle.

*The authoritarian pattern.* In a nation which boasts of freedom and the liberal spirit, it is an unpleasant fact that, generally speaking, the American school is largely autocratic in organization and func-

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. K. Young, *Personality and Problems of Adjustment* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), chap. xv.

<sup>4</sup> Laski, *op. cit.*



tion. Democratic equality is too largely an empty shibboleth. The authoritarian attitude runs throughout the whole gamut of educational activities, from an autocratic board of education to an authoritarian demand for conformity in the classroom. The school is largely an instrument of the dominant elements in a community, which almost invariably are minorities, rather than representatives of the community as a whole. As an instrument it is used by the dominant minorities—economic, political, religious—to control the thinking of the young. The administrative machinery, the curriculum, and the method of instruction reflect the values of the dominant groups, whose chief objective is not education in the sense of enabling every child and youth to grow into an independent and thinking individual but the preservation and transmission of their own prejudices.

It is characteristic of every form of authoritarianism that in controversial issues it recognizes only one point of view. In order to perpetuate this point of view it will not only claim to have the true facts but will suppress any facts which challenge it. Thus the dominant groups ruling the American school system invariably rationalize their intolerance for ideas differing from their own by saying that their purpose is to inculcate "true Americanism" in the minds of the children. This rationalization is very powerful, for it forestalls any criticism by teachers and laymen on the suspicion that anyone who objects to the teaching of "true Americanism" in the schools is *ipso facto* disloyal and "un-American."

The American teacher, as we pointed out in the preceding chapter, partly out of fear and partly out of the mediocrity of his own personality and intellectual outlook, submits to the authoritarian pattern without effective protest. At the same time many teachers find the authoritarian manner congenial to their own character. It has been repeatedly observed by students of the American school system that teachers satisfy their own need for dominance, which they rarely have the courage to express in other areas of life, by lording it over the children in their classrooms. Their autocratic behavior appears to be a mechanism for enhancing their own egos. Because teaching provides some individuals a sense of authority and power, they tend to go into the profession to compensate for felt inferiority and an ungratified wish for dominance. In the schoolroom, at least, the teacher can feel powerful and secure, for the children, he knows, are inferior to himself, afraid of his authority. This is even more true of the woman teacher, who compensates for timidity, submissiveness, and frustration through her authoritarian position. She can torture those in her charge with a dozen petty meannesses. She may quibble about the correct word on a pupil's theme under the attractive guise that a statement must be written



"just so." She may scold children about every trivial misdemeanor. The scolding and biting sarcasm can be a means of settling her own conflicts, her private quarrels, petty grudges, and narrow prejudices. She can get even for her own inferior position in the educational hierarchy.

Our purpose in this chapter is to consider the effect of our authoritarian school system upon growing children. We are now in possession of a body of empirical evidence which shows the relative effects of authoritarian and democratic "social climates" upon the behavior of children. The results of many investigations of this problem can be applied in determining the effect of the authoritarian school system upon the personalities of children.

We can get a good idea of the detrimental effect of authoritarian treatment of children from the well-known study of Lewin, Lippitt, and White.<sup>5</sup> These investigators studied the effect of small clubs organized on "democratic," "authoritarian," and "*laissez-faire*" patterns, on the behavior of ten-year-old boys. The democratic group was so organized that the leader did not order or direct, but was "objective" and "fact-minded" in his evaluations of the boys' activities. He acted like a member of the group but avoided doing too much work for the boys. The boys, on the other hand, worked out their own problems, consulting the leader about technical details, and arrived at decisions by means of group discussion. The maximum participation of every boy was in this way effected.

The social climate of the authoritarian group was quite different. Policy was determined by the leader, steps in every activity were dictated by him, his evaluations of the work-activities were "personal," and his general attitude toward the boys was one of aloofness.

A third group was characterized by a *laissez-faire* atmosphere. The leader did not participate and he gave suggestions only when he was directly consulted. He took no part in the discussions and decisions, and he seldom made any comments on the boys' work except when he was directly asked for his opinion. There was complete freedom for the boys to solve their problems in their own way.

These same group atmospheres were maintained throughout the entire experiment, and by each of four leaders in each group. This procedure furnished a control factor for the experiment and made it possible to conclude that differences in the boys' behavior were due, not to differences in the personalities of the leaders, but to differences in the group atmosphere.

The results of this experiment showed that the authoritarian procedure

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<sup>5</sup> K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and R. K. White, "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created 'Social Climates,'" *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 10 (1939), 271-299.



has harmful effects upon children. It impairs independence and initiative and breeds hostility and aggressiveness. Boys in the authoritarian group were self-centered, discontented, hostile, frustrated, and in much more need of attention from others than the boys in the democratic group. Those boys who reacted nonaggressively to the suppressive atmosphere of the authoritarian group were observed to be "dull," "lifeless," "submissive," "repressed," and "apathetic." "There was little smiling, joking, freedom of movement, freedom of initiating new projects, etc.; talk was largely confined to the immediate activity in progress, and bodily tension was often manifested."<sup>6</sup>

This and other experiments of the same kind on children show that in an autocratic, suppressive atmosphere, where children's egos are very little involved in their activities—that is, where decisions are made largely by an authority—they tend to become either very aggressive and pugnacious or submissive and timid. When they are permitted freely to participate in group decisions and are guided by a sympathetic and helpful leader, they tend to be friendly, cooperative, and relatively free from both overt and pent-up aggression.<sup>7</sup>

Recent action research, especially in industry, points to the same conclusion regarding the effect of authoritarian and democratic procedures on factory workers. Lewin has been a pioneer in this area, and a number of excellent experiments carried on within his conceptual framework have confirmed his hypotheses.<sup>8</sup> One of these controlled experiments shows that poor motivation, produced by resentment of workers against authority, was an important factor in the failure of workers when transferred to different jobs in the same plant to achieve efficiency in production. The management was the frustrating agent and resentment against it piled up. When the workers were permitted to express their own views about the problem and thus participate in decision-making, motivation improved, cooperation increased, and production exceeded previous levels.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>7</sup> See further R. Lippitt, "An Experimental Study of Authoritarian and Democratic Group Atmosphere," in *Studies in Topological and Vector Psychology, I* (University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, No. 16, 1940); R. Lippitt and R. K. White, "The 'Social Climate' of Children's Groups," in R. Barker, et al., *Child Development and Behavior* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943).

<sup>8</sup> See K. Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper, 1948), pp. 125-141.

<sup>9</sup> L. Coch and J. R. P. French, Jr., "Overcoming Resistance to Change," *Human Relations* 1 (1948), 512-532.



On the basis of this experiment, it was concluded that:

It is possible for management to modify greatly or to remove completely group resistance to changes in methods of work and the ensuing piece rates. This change can be accomplished by the use of group meetings in which management effectively communicates the need for change and stimulates group participation in planning the changes.<sup>10</sup>

Nearly all careful investigations of the morale of workers and inter-personal relations in the shop or factory have shown that among the various items which workers indicate as desirable for greater satisfaction on the job, individual "self-expression"—i.e., more decision-making and more freedom—looms very large. Their dissatisfactions and criticisms center around the frustrations and repressions connected with their work and the lack of respect for their personalities by supervisors and managers.<sup>11</sup> The lack of respect for his personality which the worker feels in his relation to management is reflected also in the worker's exclusion from effective participation in decisions concerning his own welfare. Not infrequently participation in decision-making is felt to be more important for worker-satisfaction and morale than his general living conditions.<sup>12</sup>

Studies of the type here cited are rich with implications for studying the consequences of different types of schoolroom situations. One implication of importance is that any autocratic procedure in the classroom will have similar consequences for the personalities of school children. We do not wish to imply that elementary school children are qualified to make group decisions. We do mean, however, that the autocratic school system causes frustration and generates resentments in children which could be largely avoided by a more permissive atmosphere where administrators, teachers, and pupils work toward a common goal of greater self-realization.

**Teacher-pupil Relationships.** The history of the American school system shows that the relations between teacher and pupil have been teacher-centered, and that the punitive technique has predominated. The progressive education movement, under the pioneer leadership of John Dewey, has attempted to make the child, rather than the teacher, the center of the educative process; has defined learning as doing, rather than

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 531. Reprinted by permission of John R. P. French, Jr.

<sup>11</sup> R. L. Hull and A. Kolstad, "Morale on the Job," in G. Watson, ed., *Civilian Morale* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

<sup>12</sup> J. R. P. French, A. Kornhauser, and A. Marrow, "Conflict and Cooperation in Industry," *J. Soc. Issues*, 2 (1946), No. 1; D. Katz, "Survey Techniques and Polling Procedures as Methods in Social Science," *J. Soc. Issues*, 3 (1946), 62-66.



as the mechanical mastering of a fixed curriculum. While this movement has no doubt left subtle effects on the American school, it has too often been dominated by extremists who, rather than practicing democracy in the schoolroom, have been using a *laissez-faire* technique in which the teacher seems to be largely superfluous. Most of the undeserved criticism of progressive education has been in fact a criticism of this extreme, unguided classroom behavior.

The child-centered technique of education is utilized in only a few school systems in the United States. In all school systems a less punitive and harsh atmosphere most certainly prevails today in contrast to the gloomy, even brutal, approach of earlier days. The dominant attitude, however, is still largely authoritarian, rather than democratic.<sup>13</sup> Drill rather than coherent learning, and punishment rather than self-discipline, are the motivating spirit of the educational system.

The comparative effects of authoritarian and democratic forms of classroom management have been carefully studied by several investigators. In several studies of this problem Anderson found that authoritarian behavior on the teacher's part, consisting of scolding, threatening, and preaching, occurred with high frequency. The child was compelled at every turn to inhibit his own eagerness and natural enthusiasm and to fit smoothly into the fixed pattern of classroom behavior.<sup>14</sup> In a later study Anderson and his associates found that not only does the teacher affect the child, as is known, but the child's behavior varies with different teachers.<sup>15</sup>

The positive, constructive effect of a child-centered and sympathetic approach to child-socialization is brought out in an experiment with two groups of preschool children. In one group the teachers were instructed to be mildly authoritarian, to help a child with a task only if the latter asked for it, and to be generally impersonal though not unfriendly. The social participation of the children was very limited, and they showed little in-

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<sup>13</sup> We are not unmindful of the fact that desirable changes have taken place which show concern for the welfare of the pupils, such as clinical and personal guidance. But these are special features of the educational system, whereas our concern is with the general, over-all approach to administration, teaching, and learning.

<sup>14</sup> H. H. Anderson, "Domination and Social Integration in the Behavior of Kindergarten Children and Teachers," *Genet. Psychol. Monogr.*, 21 (1939), 287-385; "Studies in Dominative and Socially Integrative Behavior," *Amer. J. Orthopsychiatry*, 15 (1945), 133-139.

<sup>15</sup> H. H. Anderson, J. E. Brewer, and M. F. Reed, "Studies of Teachers' Classroom Personalities: III. Follow-Up Studies of the Effects of Dominative and Integrative Contacts on Children's Behavior," *Appl. Psychol. Monogr.*, 11 (1946), 156.



clination toward ascendance and leadership. In a second, more democratic, group the teachers were instructed to give sympathetic help with and approval of children's play activities. In this group the children were superior to those of the first group in the aforementioned qualities.<sup>16</sup>

These and other studies lead to the conclusion already arrived at by Lewin and his co-workers regarding the effects of different social atmospheres on the behavior of children. They show that authoritarian teacher-pupil relationships impair the growth of the child into an independent and cooperative individual, whereas a more integrative, permissive, or democratic relationship breeds self-confidence, ascendance, cooperation, and leadership in the child.

The authoritarian relationship is by no means confined to the lower schools of the American school system, but exists in college classes as well. We are all familiar with the professor who will brook no disagreement by the student. The punitive approach, sarcasm, and humiliation of students are not uncommon. Recently a college student informed the writer that he denied himself the pleasure of "majoring" in his favorite subject because an instructor whom he feared and hated taught most of the required courses in the field. The same student was summarily dismissed from class one day because he turned to his neighbor in the room for a look at the latter's notebook. Every college teacher, moreover, is familiar with the fact that many students are reluctant or afraid to take issue with an instructor for fear of reprisals. It is hardly necessary, in view of what we have already said, to say that the goals of education cannot be achieved in such an environment. Democratic attitudes do not generally grow in autocratic social climates.

For education, the implication of the foregoing investigations are clear. Success in teaching, whether it be the teaching of facts of a particular discipline or helping the child to find his own place in the scheme of life, does not depend on pedagogic skill alone or even largely, but more profoundly on the kind of social atmosphere which the teacher generates in the classroom. This conclusion is in full agreement with the fundamental principle of social psychology that the behavior of an individual is a function or property of the social situation as a whole.

The differences in behavior and attitudes in the teacher-centered or authoritarian and the child-centered or democratic classrooms are not due to individual differences of the children in the two groups. This is the con-

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<sup>16</sup> G. G. Thompson, "The Social and Emotional Development of Pre-School Children under Two Types of Educational Program," *Psychol. Monogr.*, 56 (1944), 1-29.



sensus of opinion of all those who carried on experiments on the effects of social climates on teacher-pupil relationships. Lewin states the matter thus:

There have been few experiences for me as impressive as seeing the expression in children's faces change during the first day of autocracy. The friendly, open, and co-operative group, full of life, become within a short half-hour a rather apathetic-looking gathering without initiative. The change from autocracy to democracy seemed to take somewhat more time than from democracy to autocracy. Autocracy is imposed upon the individual. Democracy he has to learn.<sup>17</sup>

The authoritarian and democratic teacher-pupil relationships do not exhaust the roles of the teacher in the classroom. There are also interpersonal relations, which are determined by the personality of the teacher. Kimball Young has classified teacher personalities according to type and has presented excellent portraits of some of these teacher-types and their effect upon the pupils in the classroom.

The "Poised Teacher" controls and influences her pupils neither by democratic nor authoritarian techniques, but by the force of her own personality. She is calm and poised, quiet and kindly, and impresses partly by her attractive appearance. She may be firm but is never angry. Because of the serenity of her own personality she stimulates poise and confidence in her pupils.<sup>18</sup>

The "Male Hero" is another type who achieves excellent results by his sheer personality, for he "capitalizes on the myth of the popular hero in our American society." He controls pupils not by deliberate techniques of mastery but by his possession of "all the external features of a modern Apollo" together with a personality that commands both respect and affection. His pupils are all boys in a manual-training department of a large school. The boys hold him up as a model whose habits of dress, appearance, and manner they enthusiastically copy. If he asks some boy to perform an extra task, the pupil is honored. "He is the ideal, their great inspiration."<sup>19</sup>

Another type which Young describes is the "Saccharine Teacher." She treats all the children like "darling little angels. . . . She helps them, wheedles them, bribes them, teases them, defends them, and is distressed over any unfavorable criticism which others give them." Her attitude, according to Young, draws many children away from reality into fantasy.

<sup>17</sup> K. Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 82. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.

<sup>18</sup> K. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 440.



She is too ready a source of attention and consolation to the "Mama's boys." Because most children respond to her expectations, she has almost no disciplinary problems. Her "sweetness and light," however, Young points out, "are a bit too much for the hard-headed realists who have to work under her."<sup>20</sup>

The "Possessive Teacher of Starved Emotions" is a woman whose poorly sublimated emotional life finds a partial outlet in "buying affection and attention from the pupils." She seldom gets the satisfaction which she wants and needs, for the tendency of many pupils is either to exploit her or be indifferent to her. Many of them "build up a selfishness which youthfully refuses to be obligated, being resentful at her possessive attitude."<sup>21</sup>

Nowhere is the teacher-pupil relationship more productive of undesirable results than in the area of behavior problems of children in the schoolroom. Here the limitations of the teacher and her lack of knowledge of the elementary principles of mental hygiene are very evident. The teacher's attitudes toward the behavior problems of children all too often reflect her own disposition and her traditional authoritarian approach. More often than not she reacts to misbehavior not by a search for its causes, not by an application of well-known psychological principles, but by traditional moralistic attitudes and by her own disturbed emotions. The teacher, we must remember, wants conformity, and anything in the behavior of children which disturbs the rigid order of classroom procedure is a challenge to her authority and a threat to her self-esteem. Children's misbehavior, accordingly, is too often a source of emotional disturbance to the teacher, and she can salve her wounded self and regain her composure only by stern disciplinary action. Her attitudes and techniques thus are greatly at variance with those of a student of behavior problems, a psychiatrist, or a clinical psychologist.

Several good studies of this problem confirm the foregoing description. In a well-known and much cited investigation by Wickman, the contrasting attitudes of teachers and of psychologically trained individuals toward the behavior problems of pupils are very clearly brought out.<sup>22</sup> Wickman made

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1940 ed., p. 457.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>22</sup> E. K. Wickman, *Children's Behavior and Teachers' Attitudes* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1928). See also N. M. Campbell, "The Elementary School Teachers' Treatment of Classroom Behavior Problems," *Columbia University Teachers College Contributions to Education*, No. 668, 1935. A recent study of the same problem by the same techniques confirms, in a modified way, Wickman's conclusion, but reveals that the teacher has been progressively catching up with the mental hygiene point of view.



a study of teachers' reaction to behavior problems in elementary schools in Minneapolis and in Cleveland. He secured the individual and combined opinions of the teachers in a dozen schools on what constitutes undesirable behavior. He also got lists of undesirable behavior manifestations from thirty mental hygiene experts. When the responses of the teachers and the mental hygienists were compared, Wickman found significant differences in their respective views of what constitutes behavior problems in children. Generally, the teachers rate a form of behavior as a problem on the basis of "their dissatisfaction with the behavior of any child," and this dissatisfaction is determined largely by the amount of inconvenience it causes them and how much it is in conflict with their own conventional attitudes, especially those relating to sex, disobedience, dishonesty, etc. The mental hygiene experts, on the other hand, do not look upon the usual forms of misbehavior with concern, but stress the importance of shyness, sensitivity, withdrawing behavior, overaggressiveness, etc. Contrasting the relative importance of behavior problems in the two ratings, we find that immoralities, dishonesties, and transgressions against authority were rated most serious by the teachers; while withdrawing, and recessive personality and behavior traits were rated least serious by them. The mental hygienists, on the other hand, rated withdrawing, recessive personality and behavior traits most serious, and transgressions against authority and violations of orderliness in class least serious.<sup>23</sup>

Wickman's study shows that teachers, on the whole, consider behavior problems all forms of attitudes and conduct which are frustrating to themselves, or which are construed by them as attacks on their authority. Accordingly, they respond to their frustrations by counterattacks as means of securing release from the tensions and their discontent with the pupils. These counterattacks are various forms of punishment, overt or disguised. The punishment, according to Wickman, is not limited to "blows to the body," but takes psychological forms. He writes:

Wounding the child's pride, self-respect, and personal integrity may not have the sinister appearance of corporal punishment but it leaves its marks even more surely on the child and relieves the tension of the adult. The counterattack may take the form of shaming the child, criticizing him before the class, exacting confessions, requiring apologies, or of restrictions, imposition of tasks, negotiations,

See G. A. W. Stouffer, Jr., "Behavior Problems of Children as Viewed by Teachers and Mental Hygienists. A Study of Present Attitudes as Compared with Those Reported by E. K. Wickman," *Ment. Hyg.*, 36 (1952), 271-285.

<sup>23</sup> Wickman, *op. cit.*, p. 130.



prohibitions, admonitions, demotions. . . . When a child lies, the usual demand is that he admit his dishonesty. When a child steals, he shall confess and make retribution. When he offends sexually, he is impressed with his evil nature. Deficient school work is often treated by imposing additional school tasks or by keeping the child after hours. In all these methods of discipline there is a display of the aggrieved adult whose authority or personal integrity has been violated.<sup>24</sup>

The teacher's response to the withdrawing and recessive behavior of the child, insofar as she is aware of it, is one of "sympathy and protective feelings aroused by the dependency and inadequacy of the pupil." More commonly these problems remain unrecognized, or are neglected because they do not upset the teacher or interfere with classroom procedure. In fact, says Wickman, these forms of behavior are looked upon with favor, for they make for smooth classroom administration. We quote Wickman once more:

Unsocial children often attract the favor of the teacher by applying themselves diligently to school tasks in which they find a refuge from the difficulties of social adjustment. It will be recalled from our experimental study that the shy, sensitive child was not associated with problems of disobedience or of lack of application to school tasks. Shyness and sensitiveness are characteristics which were frequently desirable in children as well as in adults. They represent marks of deference and culture. The very characteristics of obedience and dependency which are implied in withdrawing types of behavior stimulate favorable social responses.<sup>25</sup>

The studies of Wickman and of other investigators show that the teacher's attitude toward behavior problems can have an adverse effect on the child. First of all, there is yet no evidence that the punitive method of reacting to children's behavior problems leads to eventual social adjustment, although its immediate effect of inhibiting unacceptable behavior cannot be denied in many cases. Psychologically, the method is unsound because it attacks, not the underlying causes, but only the manifest symptoms, of the child's problem. It assuages the teacher's wrath or hurt feelings, but it does not cure the child's unsocial conduct. Autocratic and punitive treatment of the misbehaving child tends to increase the very problems which the mental hygienist considers most serious. Shyness, withdrawal, and dependency are characteristic modes of reaction of some children to punitive discipline. Again, as the studies by Wickman and

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163. Reprinted by permission of The Commonwealth Fund, New York, New York.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164. Reprinted by permission of The Commonwealth Fund, New York, New York.



others show, punishment for unsocial behavior increases the child's difficulty of adjusting to the authoritarian demand for obedience and conformity. The child either comes to hate authority even more, or he develops a sense of guilt or unworthiness which further impairs his adjustment, not only to the classroom situation but to other social situations.

The teacher who expects every pupil to conform in every way to adult standards of self-control and orderly behavior is not only demanding the impossible but is creating the problem of misbehavior by evaluating the child's failure as antisocial. It is not the primary function of discipline to mollify an unstable disciplinarian, but to aid the child in a steady growth toward maturity.

In interpreting and evaluating teachers' reactions to behavior problems in the classroom, it is necessary to bear in mind, as Wickman points out, that they act in accordance with their responsibilities as laid down by the school system and by the goals of formal education in our society. The teacher to a great extent reflects the attitudes and values of the public schools and the community in which she lives. She is expected to function within the framework of goals and values in the cultivation of which she plays almost no effective part. She is a "public servant" whose attitudes and practices must correspond largely with those of the school system and of those who administer its operation. The behavior problems of school children are fundamentally the problems of the educational system. The teacher is largely an instrument for putting its expectations into concrete practice. It is the school as a whole, and not only its teachers, that puts its stamp upon the growing child's personality.

**Adjustment to the Learning Process.**<sup>26</sup> The learning process in the school is much more than a mechanical change or improvement in the performance of an act with practice. On the contrary, it is a complex social-psychological process of interaction. It can be understood only in the total social setting in which the child interacts, directly or indirectly, with the teacher, with other pupils, and with his parents. All are involved in the process, each displaying attitudes of approval or disapproval of every pupil's success or failure in reproducing the required knowledge. Ignorance of subject matter is generally not countenanced, and to be caught not knowing the answer to a question can be the cause of serious

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<sup>26</sup> The writer's sensitivity to this problem was sharpened by Kimball Young's discussion of it in his *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, chap. xv. The student should profit from reading this chapter, especially from the case studies of pupils and their problems.



emotional disturbances. The fear of not knowing encourages not only dishonesty in the pupil but impels him to use a variety of protective devices to conceal his ignorance and bolster his self-esteem. That psychological science has established the fact of individual differences in learning ability seems generally to be ignored or forgotten, and every child is expected to master the same knowledge and reproduce it to the satisfaction of the teacher who sits in judgment.

The painful effect on the pupil of his evaluation by teacher, parents, and pupils is particularly obvious in case of failure. Frequently the child is too inexperienced to integrate failure in a school task into his life organization to make it serve as an opportunity for getting a better perspective on his own abilities. In this situation a failure cannot be used constructively by the child nor serve as a stimulus to renewed effort. Instead, it increases his sense of inadequacy and magnifies his fear or hatred of the entire learning situation. As a matter of fact, not only can the child frequently not get proper guidance or wise encouragement, but the school system is so organized that certain pupils are bound to fail. "Teachers," writes Stagner, "rarely seem to perceive the irony of encouraging every child to strive for high marks, then giving grades on a distribution basis so that a fixed percentage is certain to fail."<sup>27</sup>

With the child of limited intellectual ability, the effect of failure can be deeply demoralizing. All indications point to the need of altering the course of study in these cases in order to enable the child to experience success and the approval of others which comes with success. School authorities, however, too frequently fail to adjust the course of study to the child and instead squeeze him into the prescribed mold even though it requires that the child be pressed beyond his capacity.

Existing evidence suggests that failure need not have a demoralizing effect on the child. If the work which he is asked to perform is made interesting and if he is sympathetically encouraged to try again after a failure, his motivation can be increased and his confidence can be maintained. In their experiment with preschool children, Updegraff and Keister were able to demonstrate the foregoing observation. They constructed tests which caused failure and many of its emotional concomitants, such as destructiveness, resignation, and emotional tension. After the children completed their tests, the investigators divided their sample equally into a control group and a training group. The training group was given a series of graded tasks

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<sup>27</sup> R. Stagner, *Psychology of Personality*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 393.



so that each child was able to experience a feeling of success at each step. As the difficulty of the tasks increased, an increasing amount of perseverance was required to perform the task successfully. At the same time each child knew of his own progress throughout the experiment. The investigators found that discouragement, crying, resentment, etc., no longer accompanied the performance of the task and that the children's motivation and interest markedly increased.<sup>28</sup>

Various studies show that both the very bright and the very dull child suffer from the conventional school curriculum. Whereas the inferior child suffers demoralization and utter defeat in the face of tasks geared to the average child's mentality, the superior child becomes bored, listless, and resentful of the dull routine of the classroom pace. As a consequence, both children may become behavior problems. Delinquency is by no means confined to the intellectually slow child, for very often he merely becomes more docile as the days pass, whereas the bright child, by virtue of his greater imagination, motivation, and adventurousness, may be led into antisocial activities. In any case, failures which are induced by a curriculum too far removed from the realities of children's interests and abilities beget undesirable personalities.<sup>29</sup> The price in resentment, quarrelsomeness, destructiveness, discouragement, and withdrawal is too high to pay for the preservation of an antiquated school system.

## The Church in American Life

In Chapter 8 we showed that the belief system, or religion, plays a significant role in men's lives. When the practical controls fail to achieve certain goals for man, he usually appeals for supernatural aid. Religion has always been influential in regulating the lives of men. Through religious beliefs and practices, man has tried to relate himself to the forces which he believes control his life and the course of the world in which he lives.

Our concern in this section is with the institutional expression of religion in the form of the church. Unlike preliterate man, for whom religion is an integral part of his daily life, suffusing it with an all-pervasive potency,

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<sup>28</sup> R. Updegraff, ed., and M. E. Keister, "Studies in Preschool Education: II. The Behavior of Young Children in Failure," *University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare*, 14 (1938), 27-82.

<sup>29</sup> See A. A. Sandin, "Social and Emotional Adjustments of Regularly Promoted and Nonpromoted Pupils," *Child Development Monogr.*, No. 32, 1944. Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University.



literate man has organized his religion into a specialized agency of social control called the church. As an agency of social control it has used all the techniques of influence and psychological appeals that are calculated to win and hold the individual to a specified set of beliefs and dogmas. It has shaped man into a rigid, preconceived being. It has persuaded or compelled him to inhibit or sublimate his natural desires for a future reward whose problematic nature it never permits to be questioned. It has thoroughly capitalized on man's elemental emotions, particularly hatred and fear, to achieve its ends. It has held up before him ideals of love and sacrifice and promises of solace and peace which have been of inestimable psychological value to him in achieving stability, comfort, and hope in a world where he seldom feels fully at home. An institution so vital in man's life can hardly be ignored by the serious student of human behavior.

**The Church as an Institution.** While theologians and apologists may argue vehemently for the sacred and divinely ordained nature of the church, the fact is that, like all institutions, it is a human artifact. It was designed by men to achieve certain human ends. It is an agency through which civilized man interacts or communicates with a suprasocial being, or God, whom man has endowed with powers which he himself does not possess. It adjusts man to the universe and helps him to achieve security in face of the un-understood and the unknown. As an institution it is also an agency of social solidarity or cohesion, serving as a focus of human fellowship. If men have often deserted the church, it is because it has failed to live up to its communal character, its concern for the social welfare of man, and has preoccupied itself instead with sectarian creeds and theological disputes. The church was created for the glory of God and has too often forgotten the misery of man. It has forgotten its secular origin and has tended to move away from social service toward the maintenance of vested interests and a theological *status quo*.

The institutional character of the church is particularly evident in two lines of its development. It has, first, been an extension of the family matrix; and second, it has been closely related to the structure of the political state.

**The church as a father surrogate.** The church has put into concrete form a characteristic of most religions, namely, a dependence upon or surrender to a higher power than man. This higher power in Western churches has been an all-powerful father who helps and punishes his children according to their deserts. Their deserts are dependent on their readiness or failure to obey the deity, the all-powerful and all-wise heavenly father. Organized religion has always stressed the



necessity for man to submit himself to divine authority. If in this submission he lost his own independence, man could always count on the protection from the deity. In a world which he does not fully understand and which is full of pitfalls and dangers to his own safety, he was convinced, mostly by threats and persuasion, that protection was more satisfying than independence.

The clearest expression of this submission to a higher power as well as of the resulting self-humiliation and self-hatred is found in the Calvinistic wing of the Protestant church. Calvinism, since its inception, has called man's attention to his own helplessness and spiritual poverty.<sup>30</sup> Man's life as such becomes insignificant, but it takes on value in proportion to his recognition of his own weakness and worthlessness.

It was not a difficult step from this authoritarian relation of the powerful father and his helpless children to the alienation between the "superior" and the "inferior" classes in the socioeconomic world. The Calvinistic movement early allied itself with the middle classes, who were struggling for their economic independence, and repudiated the lower classes. Its followers thus developed into a solid group of élites, and the church which crystallized out of the movement has consistently been on the side of the landowners or capitalists and against the working masses.

Although the Lutheran form of the Christian church differs markedly from the Calvinistic, in matters of power relationship it has had a similar, though much more absolutistic, development. Owing to the Peasants' Revolt, Lutheranism, too, repudiated the lower classes, and assumed an absolutist, antidemocratic position in its relationship to them.<sup>31</sup>

All in all, the Protestant church, particularly in the United States, has extended the autocratic relationship of the father and the child to the authoritarian relationship of God to man and to the superordinate-subordinate relationship of the upper to the lower classes.

The childlike dependence on the father, the need for self-abasement, the emphasis on the helplessness and worthlessness of man, the promise of future reward for the poverty of the present, and the like—these common attitudes of the religious communicant toward God are recurrent expressions in Protestant hymns. In a study of the content of nearly three thousand of these hymns, Kimball Young found the foregoing themes expressed re-

<sup>30</sup> See J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1928), pp. 680-682.

<sup>31</sup> See P. Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, trans. by J. L. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 176-181.



peatedly. Classifying the hymns on the basis of their psychological content, he found nine different categories, some of which we shall describe here.<sup>32</sup>

The clearest and most frequent expression of the father surrogate is found in what Young calls an *infantile return* to God, the Father. These hymns support the Freudian argument that religious beliefs are expressions of a projected return to the safety of the father's house. Instead of relying on his own strength, man projects his experiences as a child and calls upon God, his father, who has superior strength and wisdom, to protect him from the uncontrollable dangers of life.<sup>33</sup> This wish to return to God, according to Young, is found in such typical phrases as "The Father, the Son," "The Holy Family," "The Shepherd," "King of Kings," "In His Arms He'll Shield You," etc. These songs represent "the good parent projected into God."<sup>34</sup>

*Future reward* is another frequent theme. It is clearly an expression of the need for compensation for balked wishes, failures, and deprivations in this life on earth. As such it is closely related to the infantile wish to return to the father and occurs with almost the same frequency as the latter—in 33 per cent of the hymns studied.<sup>35</sup> The emphasis on future reward is at the same time a condemnation of the world of the flesh and a devaluation of worldly goods. Its purpose is to control man's indulgence in immediate pleasures. The theme of future reward is found in such phrases as "The Holy City" and "The Pearly Gates." Its most ecstatic expression is seen in the lines:

I have read of a beautiful city,  
Far away in the Kingdom of God;  
I have read how its walls are of Jasper  
How its streets are golden and broad.<sup>36</sup>

The feeling of worthlessness, to which we have already called attention, or the feeling of *sinfulness*, is a powerful religious theme in the Christian religion and is commonly expressed in many of its hymns. Such phrases as "Ye Sinners, Yield Not to Temptation," "Freed from Endless Sin," etc., occur frequently. The sense of sin, however, may be eradicated by a return to God, thus connecting this motive with the predominant religious wish. The latter fact is further illustrated in another theme, that of *exaltation*. The

<sup>32</sup> K. Young, "The Psychology of Hymns," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 20 (1925), 391-406.

<sup>33</sup> S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (London: Hogarth Press, 1928).

<sup>34</sup> Young, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397. Reprinted by permission of *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* and American Psychological Association, Inc., Washington, D.C.



sinner can always find redemption in conversion and experience a triumph over evil and the Devil. The triumph itself is an expression of *sadistic projection*, another theme in Protestant hymnology—a glorification of anger and belligerency expressed against Satan. The "Church militant" and "Onward Christian Soldiers" are revealing expressions of the sadistic tendency in the Christian religion, despite its emphasis on brotherly love.

Since aggression can be turned inward against oneself, as well as outward against Satan and sin, we find that another theme is the sense of *inferiority and self-hatred*. This is no doubt in turn related to the sense of guilt, or the feeling of sinfulness. The pleasure of suffering, "especially when the action is rationalized as being for the love of one's Saviour, is marked in all Christian credos." The function of the sense of inferiority in view of Christ's suffering is to "indicate to sinner and believer alike how inconsequential he is." Phrases like "He died on Calvary's cross," "Calvary's tree," and "Lamb of God, we bow at Thy feet" express the masochism and sense of inferiority.<sup>37</sup>

These and other themes of Protestant hymns discussed by Young confirm our earlier statement that the church has emphasized, and continues to emphasize, the theme that man is a helpless creature who must rely on the strength and wisdom of an all-powerful father. Whatever strength man has, or is able to acquire, he gets from complete submission and surrender to an awe-inspiring God. Actually the variety of motives underlying the religious attitude as crystallized in the church can be reduced to three: (1) the fear and helplessness of man in the face of the unknown and the uncontrollable; (2) mental-emotional conflict arising from a strong feeling of guilt; and (3) compensation for balked wishes.<sup>38</sup>

*The church and state.* In our analysis of the relation between the belief systems (religion) and social ideologies (political organization, the state), we asserted that in the Middle Ages church and state were practically identical as functional units of social organization, and that today the church is rapidly being replaced by social ideologies, by schemes of social salvation. In the Nazi and Communist states this replacement has been almost complete. The surrender to nationalistic ideology has characterized the Protestant church throughout the world.<sup>39</sup> This

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 397-402.

<sup>38</sup> See D. Katz and R. L. Schanck, *Social Psychology* (New York: Wiley, 1938), pp. 196-198.

<sup>39</sup> One might plausibly argue that in Nazi and Communist societies the church has not abdicated to the state, but that the two have once more become a single institution.



is another reason why the masses are becoming alienated from the Protestant churches.<sup>40</sup>

In the Middle Ages the church dictated what man was to believe not only about God but about the whole secular world. The church functionaries were veritable dictators who could decide on all issues, sacred or secular. The Pope, rather than the king, could well have uttered the infamous phrase, "*L'état, c'est moi!*" It "controlled man's birth, his education, his marriage, even imposed limitations on his trade and business activity, and offered him salvation at his death."<sup>41</sup>

Today, however, the influence of the church is on the decline. Many of its functions are being taken over by other institutions which, while they cooperate with the church, perform services which are not strictly religious in nature. Associations like the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. are examples. Furthermore, the church is taking upon itself activities and services which are not conventionally religious, and the minister does very much more than preach sermons and visit in the homes of his parishioners. Thus, typical urban churches will have clubs for boys and for girls, sewing classes, dramatic classes, clinics, bands or orchestras, and kindergartens.<sup>42</sup>

Another index of the waning influence of the church is its changing membership. While membership throughout the country does not change appreciably, the church's influence upon the masses of industrial workers is diminishing rapidly. Since about 1890 urban churches have been steadily losing memberships among the industrial laborers. Statistics show that the larger the community the smaller is the percentage of church attendance. Thus in towns under 2,500 the average attendance is 71 per cent; in communities of 3,500-5,000, it is 66 per cent; in cities of 5,000-10,000, it is 46 per cent; in cities of 10,000-50,000, it is 42 per cent; and in cities of 50,000 and over, it is only 30 per cent.<sup>43</sup>

This situation has produced changes in the attitudes and behavior of those who are church members and of those who have found substitute interests for religious participation. The middle and upper classes, who are the economic mainstay of the church, whose memberships seldom lapse, use their memberships to maintain respectability, but may live very

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Tillich, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-181.

<sup>41</sup> J. F. Brown, *Psychology and the Social Order* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936), p. 158.

<sup>42</sup> See H. Paul Douglass, *1000 City Churches* (New York: Doran, 1926), pp. 79-82.

<sup>43</sup> R. W. Babson, *Literary Digest*, Aug. 6, 1932. See also H. P. Douglass and E. de S. Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution* (New York: Harper, 1935), pp. 39-41.



much at variance, especially in their business and professional relationships, with the ideals and values of their respective churches. The lower classes, particularly the masses of industrial laborers, have progressively repudiated the church because it has tended to neglect their interests. Marxism and the labor movement have taught them to be suspicious of a religious institution that promises them the joys of heaven while leaving the causes of economic misery untouched.<sup>44</sup> The historical Protestant church has largely failed "in face of the proletarian situation."<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, as Tillich points out, "the proletarian consciousness has been aware of the perversion and inner contradiction of a society that permits such a thing to exist as a proletarian situation and the breaking-up of society into classes."<sup>46</sup> The industrial worker is progressively finding his integration and self-respect not in a power outside himself but in a relentless opposition to the rich who promise him a heaven which he no longer needs or wants.

The industrial worker, more than any others except certain intellectuals, has become aware, not because of greater historical insight but because he has suffered from its degrading influence, of the contradictions of a religious organization that permits the irreligious exploitation of human beings by its own members. As Tillich, who certainly is no Marxist, has pointed out:

No men in our time, regardless of whether they belong to the bourgeois or the proletarian group, can escape the permanent and essential contradictions of the capitalist system. The most obvious and basic of these contradictions is the class struggle that is going on at every moment, both from above and from below. No one can avoid having a part in it, since in capitalism it necessarily produces the struggle for existence. This does not mean that anyone should or could accept the class struggle as desirable. It is a symptom of a disease. . . .

Protestantism must fight not only against other ideologies but also against its own. . . . It must show how the "man-made God" of Catholicism was in the interest of the feudal order, of which the medieval church was a part; how the ideology of Lutheranism was in the interest of the patriarchal order, with which Lutheran orthodoxy was associated; how the idealistic religion of humanistic Protestantism is in the interest of a victorious *bourgeoisie*.<sup>47</sup>

.....  
<sup>44</sup> We do not wish to imply that the American industrial worker is imbued with Marxist doctrines. The truth is that the American laborer is not, like the European worker, sophisticated in the dialectics of Marxist philosophy. He has, however, been influenced by the Marxist discontent with and hatred of capitalistic exploitation and is increasingly accepting the belief that he is poor because of the selfishness and moral bankruptcy of the rich.

<sup>45</sup> Tillich, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169. Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press.



The proletariat has not always rejected the promises of the church, and a small segment is still influenced by its teachings. In the past the church, both Catholic and Protestant, was a source of deep consolation to the masses of the dispossessed and the poor. The promise of an afterlife where their wants and their hopes would be realized was a powerful stimulus to faith and an effective means of mitigating their suffering. Today these appeals affect mostly the floating population and the culturally submarginal groups who have little hope and even less motivation to improve their lot. For them the labor movement has meant and has done nothing. They are swayed largely by the Pentecostal churches, prophetic religious leaders, and the emotionalism of Evangelistic sects. It is quite possible that a considerable segment of the American farm workers has not been influenced by the labor movement for the same reason, for farmers, like the culturally submarginal masses, are attracted by prophetic and evangelistic appeals. There is no doubt, however, that the dispossessed classes in the United States are deeply influenced by the fervor and prophetic projections of evangelistic and similar sects. Revivalism has been a significant influence on the character of many Americans, especially before the appearance of powerful labor organizations, and it is still a force of considerable potency.<sup>48</sup>

We pointed out earlier that many of the functions of the church and closely related ecclesiastical bodies have been transferred to other institutions. In some countries, as we have shown, notably Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, the transfer was made almost entirely to the state. The promise of security, certainty, and a sense of direction for every man's life, once a function of the churches in those countries, was provided by the political state. Church and state once more became roughly equivalent, but with a difference that is most important for the peace and morality of the world: the state itself became the established "religion," the new orthodoxy. Because the leaders of the state promised to fulfill the longings of the dispossessed and disillusioned masses, their effect was startling. Unlike the prophetic and evangelistic sects of earlier days, who promised salvation in heaven, these secular "churches" promised it in the world of the here and now. It has become only too clear, however, that they provided these things in a "demonic and self-destructive way. They sacrificed

<sup>48</sup> See F. M. Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals* (New York: Macmillan, 1905), pp. 75-80; R. L. Duffus, "Moody: Showman of the Sawdust Trail," *Reader's Digest*, June, 1937.



freedom for security, autonomy for certainty, individuality for community, and personality for an absolute symbol.”<sup>49</sup>

In Nazi Germany the state was the highest object of loyalty and devotion. It was the supreme power greater than and outside man. The Nazi's devotion to this supreme power was expressed, as in all churches, through prescribed ritual and ceremony. Just as the Christian religion had its Jesus who served as a model of moral perfection and brotherly love, so Naziism had its Hitler, to whom allegiance was ardently vowed by millions of his followers. Its holy book was not the Judaic-Christian Bible but Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Nationalism became the new religion, and its God was the state.

In Soviet Russia a similar development has been taking place. The early avowed internationalism espoused by Karl Marx has given way to a “demonic” nationalism. In Russia the state, too, is the supreme power, and its saints are Lenin and Stalin—with Stalin determined, by means of historical manipulation, to make himself supreme.

In the face of these, and other developments, it is not surprising to find some men predicting the triumph of “statism” over organized religion.<sup>50</sup>

*The conflict of ideas.* Frequently church teachings become a source of a variety of conflicts in the child's mind as he grows older.

Although the child learns many of the attitudes toward God, evil, sin, and the like in the home, they are considerably strengthened by what he learns in Sunday School and in other forms of participation in the church. The church impresses upon his mind its stories and legends of creation, the wages of sin, the evil consequences of disobedience, God's punishment of the wicked, etc. These ideas and beliefs become important contents of the child's mind, and they are learned at a time in his growth when he is incapable of understanding them clearly. Whether they are taught to him as literal truths or not, he usually accepts them as such. Being unable to interpret them in any other light, he often comes to fear them, and to center other emotional responses around them. These ideas come in time to shape his view of the cosmos and of the world of man and to condition his attitude toward life.

If the real world in which he actively participates in later life were congruent with the view of man and the universe which he acquires from his earlier religious training, he probably would experience no adverse effects from the church's influence. His church would then have prepared him to

<sup>49</sup> Tillich, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

<sup>50</sup> See C. J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), chap. iv.



function adequately in later life. However, the child eventually comes into contact with a world and with ideas that are profoundly at variance with his earlier training. The psychological import of this discovery is not a mere change in knowledge but requires an emotional shift regarding the whole meaning of existence, which not infrequently leads to a serious crisis and produces disastrous effects on the personality. Not having been provided with the inner fortitude that comes from dependence upon himself to meet this shift, the young person is unable, except after considerable fumbling and moral anguish, to build a new life organization that will restore his emotional stability. Instead we find in such breakdowns of the older code, "a throw-back to the more primitive, untrained emotions of the individual. The result may be personal disintegration. There may be undue indulgence in the use of narcotics or alcohol; these overindulgences may lead to excesses in other fields. The whole inflexible code, once it begins to go to pieces, is likely to break down everywhere."<sup>51</sup>

This shift in ideational content and emotional reactions to the legends of the Sunday School and the church frequently comes in adolescence, a period in the youth's development when he already has problems enough. In the high school, and particularly in college, his earlier ideas are often shattered. In his college courses he is confronted by scientific ideas and discoveries which, however they may be rationalized by teachers who are sensitive to their effects upon the student's mind, challenge much which he took to be infallible and ultimate certainties. In short, the conflict between ancient myths and modern "truths" tends to create an outcome for the personality which is decidedly, sometimes irrevocably, bad. One may be pardoned, accordingly, for suggesting that it might be better for the individual if he were not taught the Biblical legends with their primitive emotional freightage at all.

**The Integrative Function of the Church.** It would be a grave error to suppose that the influence of the church is only negative.

For those individuals who accept its doctrines and for those who reconcile its beliefs with modern knowledge by viewing the legends of the past as only stages in the growth toward religious maturity, the church has always been a profound integrative force in their lives. Whether we consider people's own estimate of the value of religion in their lives as sincere expressions or as unconscious rationalizations makes little or no difference in the effect it has on their lives and character. Millions of people still set up the teaching of their churches and the life of Christ as ideals toward which

<sup>51</sup> K. Young, *Social Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1930), p. 303.



persisted throughout the centuries and is today experiencing what appears to be a renaissance of its original gospel.

The humanistic churches do not rely upon religious explanations of man and the universe. They leave this task where it rightly belongs: in the realm of science. Their interests lie in fostering social idealism, and bringing about a more decent community of men. If they have but barely started, that fact itself is indicative of the strong hold that the traditional churches have upon men; for while men everywhere have ceased to believe the outworn doctrines of the past, they have not in fact surrendered them. If the potential influence of the church in integrating the lives of men is to be realized, the outworn doctrines must be given up as well.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

Our survey of the influences of the school and the church upon the personality of the individual should leave no doubt in the student's mind that these institutions do have serious, often lifelong, effects, both favorable and unfavorable, upon the maturing child and youth. Unfortunately, as our study has shown, their influence is too often negative. They handicap the individual in his growth toward maturity and independence. They place authority and the need for blind conformity too high in the scale of socializing values. Too often neither the school nor the church has any clear aim, outside obedience to its dictates. Few young people in our schools have any idea of where their school is leading them, and many discontinue their education because they are either discouraged or confused. Progressively fewer people find their churches sources of inspiration or consolation and, while they may attend as regularly as ever, they often fail to take its precepts seriously.

Our data show that the conventional authoritarian school system with its outworn curricula and its autocratic procedures will not produce in any significant numbers individuals with ascendant personalities. On the contrary, the danger is very real that it will continue, as in the past, to stifle originality and independence and cater to mediocrity. Although we do not believe that it is the function of the school to produce only leaders and exceptional people, since that cannot be done without basic abilities in children, the evidence points unmistakably to the conclusion that too often the school tends to destroy what potential gifts the child brings to school with him. It is not even wholly correct to say, as is often done, that the school is organized for the average pupil. It is nearer to the truth to say that all too frequently the school is administered for the convenience of those who administer and operate it. The aim of producing intelligent and informed citizens is subordinated to the indoctrination of children

<sup>58</sup> Cf. A. E. Garvie, *The Christian Ideal for Human Society* (New York: Harper, 1930).



in the inviolability of the *status quo*. The teacher, who might be a potent influence in enabling each child to realize his own potentialities, tends to stifle his eager aspirations. She fails to be the leader that she should be either because of her own limitations or because the school system has too often strangled her own personality. In these circumstances she becomes an instrument of positive evil, for, as we have shown, she compensates for her own frustrations by creating a punitive and autocratic atmosphere. The timid child in these circumstances becomes more timid, and the energetic youngster becomes more rebellious.

In our opening remarks on the role of the church in American life we asserted that it has been an important agency of social control. It is impossible to prove that life would be chaotic and brutish without the controlling and leavening influence of religion and the church. The cynic is tempted to remark that it has been brutish in any event, and that the church has been unable to pacify the human animal. Be that as it may, the fact is that the church has helped to hold people's impulses in check and has provided them with a life organization with which to meet the problems of communal living.

On the other hand the very spiritual sustenance that the church has given men has also been a source of their weakness. A too ready fear of the deity or a too easy reliance upon his grace often serves as a crutch and a deterrent to individual effort. If self-abasement and submission to authority is as undesirable as we have been led to believe—and the types of evidence which we have submitted in this book support the belief—then the authoritarian religion of our churches is psychologically undesirable. No sensitive and perceptive person will deny the value of humbleness and an awareness of one's own limitations. But the self-abasement which the church too often demands humiliates the spirit and lowers the dignity of man. Today we possess sufficient psychological knowledge to permit us to assert with confidence that self-humiliation and feelings of unworthiness or sinfulness are positively harmful.

There are signs, particularly in the "liberal" or "modernist" churches of today, of a recognition of the constricting and maladjustive effects of the older authoritarian religion. These churches have been preaching a new doctrine, breeding confidence and self-respect in the individual. They have been preaching the philosophy of social salvation instead of the doctrine of post-mortem bliss. In this they are recapturing the original gospel of Christians and Jews: the ideals of social justice and the dignity of man. In this they are confirmed and supported by the researches of modern social psychology.





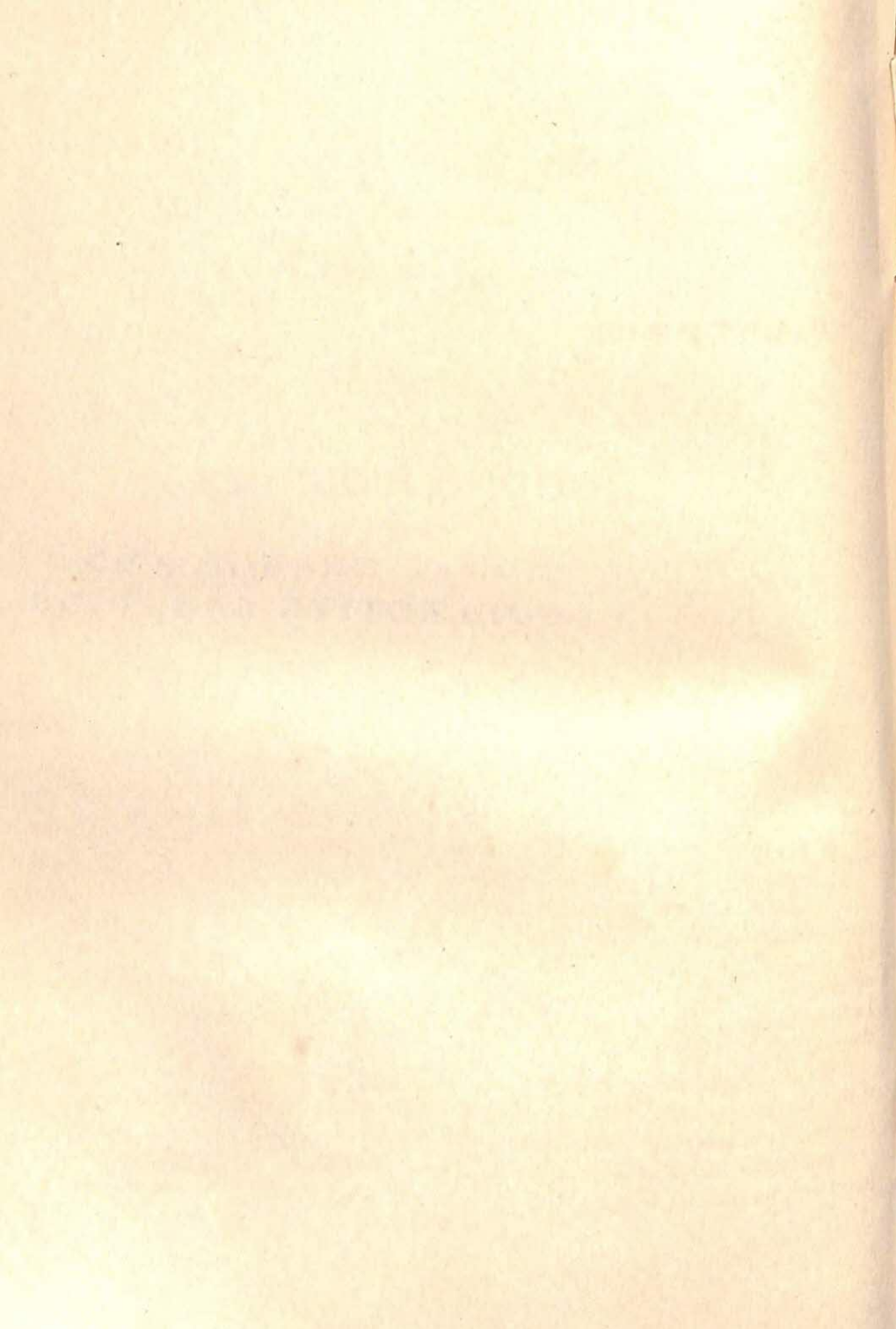


PART FOUR:

# Group Dynamics

SOCIAL CHANGE AND  
COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR







## CHAPTER 13 :

# Group Tensions and Conflicts

THE CONCEPT OF THE "group" has loomed large in this book. We have described in various ways its impact on the individual, either in the form of its members or the form of its culture. Our concern thus far has been, however, with *the behavior of the individual in the group*. In this and the following chapter we shall examine the *behavior of the group itself*—how it comes into being, how it changes, and how it behaves as a dynamic complex of individuals. This is the problem of group dynamics.

The study of group behavior raises serious problems. The most vexing of these is the question as to whether the principles by which we have explained the behavior of the individual in the group are adequate to account for the behavior of groups themselves. While we shall try to discuss group dynamics in terms of the basic frame of reference by which we ac-



counted for the behavior of the individual in society, we realize that in the present stage of our knowledge in social psychology the issue is still open and debatable.

The biological heritage of man is relatively unimportant in accounting for the behavior of groups. Certainly heredity throws little or no light on our problem. There is no evidence that men act in groups because they have an instinct of gregariousness; and the traditional explanation, which unhappily is not yet dead, that men act together because they have a "group mind," is untenable. Culture apparently plays a role, but its activating force has not been empirically determined. A Southern lynching mob expresses its "collective anger" by hanging its victim. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake when the belief in and the burning of witches was an accustomed practice. Generally speaking, a British crowd is likely to be less active and more circumspect than an American one. Group morale differs, both as to its source and its expression, in Japan, Germany, and the United States.<sup>1</sup> These are expressions of cultural differences, not of biological traits.

The behavior of groups can be most adequately described on the background of social interaction and social change. It is characteristic of primitive people that, outside their ceremonial group activities, which are rigidly prescribed by tradition and cultural expectancies, they do not engage in those forms of group behavior which are numerous in complex and mobile societies, namely, crowd behavior, mob activities, social movements, and the like. Their collective behavior is institutionalized, i.e., rigidly prescribed and sanctioned behavior. When we study the behavior of groups, we focus our attention, not on the single individual, but on a body of individuals acting together with reference to a common goal or objective. We are studying a dynamic or field condition in which changes in one point or region of the field are transmitted to all other points or regions in the total field.

Does this mean that we can safely ignore the behavior of the individual when describing the action of an entire group? We have said that this question is still debatable. Nevertheless, there are sufficient reasons to lead us to believe that in order to account for the behavior of the group we have to take into consideration the behavior of the individual. If this is true, then the conceptual scheme by means of which we have described and interpreted the behavior of the individual in the group will be found to be

<sup>1</sup> See H. Blumer, "Morale," in W. F. Ogburn, ed., *American Society in Wartime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 207-231; D. Perk, "Morale," *Ment. Hyg.*, 35 (1951), 19-40.



adequate for an account of the behavior of the group as a whole. This integration of individual and group behavior requires, however, that we surrender the many naïve and false assumptions regarding the underlying dynamics of the behavior of people in groups which have confused discussions of the psychology of collective behavior.

### The Nature of Group Behavior

Before we consider the specific forms of group behavior, it is necessary to give a satisfactory account of the fundamental principles that govern it. A group is said to exist whenever two or more individuals are in dynamic relationship to one another, so that the behavior of each is affected by the behavior of all. This follows from the principle of interaction by which we explained the behavior of the single individual. The interaction of one person with others forms a complex of interrelationships in which the activity in question takes place simultaneously among all the members of the group.

**The Group-mind Fallacy.** In its study of group behavior, social psychology has been seriously handicapped by the "crowd psychology" of Gustave Le Bon.<sup>2</sup> According to Le Bon, whenever two or more people are gathered together under certain circumstances they express in their behavior characteristics which are different from those of each individual separately. This difference is the formation of a *collective mind* which is a single being and is governed by the law of the mental unity of crowds.<sup>3</sup> By virtue of its possession of a collective mind, a group of people feels, thinks, and acts differently from its separate individuals. This psychological group is a distinct being, formed by the combination of heterogeneous individuals, just as the living body is a combination of separate cells.

As a member of this collectivity, furthermore, the individual derives a sense of extraordinary power which he does not possess as an individual. This sense of power induces him to yield to his natural impulses and to do things he would not do under other circumstances, especially since, as a member of a group, he is usually anonymous and not subject to the circum-spection which controls him as an independent individual. Under these circumstances the power of "contagion" also operates, causing the indi-

<sup>2</sup> G. Le Bon, *The Crowd* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1917). This is an English translation of Le Bon's influential book, *Psychologie des Foules* (Paris: 1895).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.



vidual to subordinate his interests to the demands of the crowd. He thus acts not in accordance with his own wishes but spontaneously and helplessly in accordance with the wishes of the collective mentality, somewhat as a hypnotized subject carries out the suggestions or commands of a hypnotist.<sup>4</sup>

While some more recent espousals of this hypothesis, notably that of McDougall, are advancements over the views of Le Bon, they postulate the same untenable principles of group behavior. The concept of the group-mind or collective mentality, under whatever guise, is a vitalistic principle, positing an extra-psychological force to account for the behavior of people in groups. The group-mind is a substance, force, or entity over and above the individual which accounts for the latter's behavior. It makes a sharp distinction between the "mind" or behavior of the individual and the "mind" or behavior of the group. Since the basic philosophy of science which underlies our book is organismic, or field-theoretical, we cannot accept such a dichotomy, and we must reject as utterly mystical and vitalistic the conception of a collective mind, having its own being and following its own laws.

**Group Dynamics.** Although we regard the group as a unit, we do not need to assume that this unit has a mind of its own. Its behavior is a product of the goals and personality make-up of the individual members who compose it. The group does not have goals and interests of its own distinct from those of its individual members. The laws which govern the behavior of groups do not differ fundamentally from those which govern the behavior of the individual. The "togetherness" of the behavior of a group of individuals is due to a circular reaction in which there is a high degree of self-intensification in each member of his own excitement as he finds it reflected in others. The process is social interaction. People in a mob, for example, are together because of the "contagion" of excitement present in the group. The excitement is largely a result of shared feelings and emotions which in each member separately had no adequate outlet. While the expectations which are encrusted in the culture play a part in the behavior, the individual acts in accordance with the spontaneous "mood" of the immediate collection of individuals whose feelings he shares at the moment. When he is adequately stimulated, the individual will, by virtue of his biological make-up, respond to others. When his response to others is shared by them, when it becomes reciprocal or interactive, when the relationship between him and others forms a pattern

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.



of mutual stimulation-and-response, there exists the basic condition of group behavior. Together the members of a group share a common perception and this common perception is affected by the norms of the culture of which it is a part. People in a lynching mob, for example, act together because they have a common perception. They see their Negro victim whom they are about to hang as a threat to "white supremacy" or to the purity of "Southern womanhood."

In all this the crucial factor is that people form a behaving group when they bear a dynamic psychological relationship to one another. This interactive psychological relationship may be described by the term *group dynamics*. In the past few years group dynamics has become, under the inspiration and leadership of the late Kurt Lewin, an inclusive and important branch of social psychology. From this point of view group behavior cannot be interpreted exclusively on the basis of the personality of the individual or the character of the social situation. The most adequate account of group behavior in the present stage of our knowledge is in terms of both variables. Group behavior is a function of both the individual person and the social situation. This is the *group-dynamic*, or *field-theoretical* explanation.

This mode of analysis of group phenomena is in complete accord with our description and interpretation of individual behavior as a function of the interaction of the biopsychological individual with the sociocultural environment. The difference lies only in the object of attention and emphasis. In Parts II and III we concentrated on the changes that take place in the individual as a result of his interaction with members of his group and his interiorization of its cultural heritage. In Part IV we are concentrating on the changes that take place within the group itself. Again, just as the individual is seeking both stability and growth—an adjustment and enhancement of the self—so a group tends to be constantly undergoing changes in its structure and a balancing of its forces into a relatively stable equilibrium. But just as the individual can never wholly reduce his tensions, so a group can never entirely eliminate its disruptive forces. Change is a characteristic of both the individual and the group.<sup>5</sup> It is a mistake to expect more than a relative balancing of forces in the individual or group.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> This statement holds true, though with less force, of the more or less permanent groups which we call institutions, such as the family, community, and state.

<sup>6</sup> For a general, though somewhat difficult, introduction to group dynamics see K. Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics," *Human Relations*, 1 (1947), 5-41, 143-153. See also K. Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science*, ed. by D. Cartwright. (New York:



The group is a field of forces which are constantly undergoing a redistribution relative to one another. These "forces" are individuals who by virtue of their customs and traditions, as well as because of the conditions of the present situation, behave in certain, even fairly predictable, ways. The group, then, is a social field, not in the sense that it has an existence of its own, but in the sense that, while it differs from its members, the latter behave uncritically, thus creating the illusion that when they act together they form a being over and above themselves. It is still the individual members themselves, however, who act, and not the group as something apart from them. As in any *Gestalt* or whole, the individuals are not obliterated; they still act to some degree in accordance with their settled habits and sanctioned customs. The more aware each one is of himself in his relations to others, the less is he subject to their influence. The more each is a "center of high potential," the less is he a victim of the suggestion by others. It is very doubtful whether a highly self-conscious, self-reflective individual would become a member of certain types of corporate activities, such as crowds, mobs, and collective "epidemics." A highly individualistic person frequently acts on the basis of his own wishes and goals and is not so completely motivated by common perceptions and understandings as most people are. Individualism and self-consciousness are psychological barriers to suggestion and rapport; they engender resistance and social distance and thereby separate people and prevent them from acting together as a single collectivity of persons, as in crowds, or as a collectivity of ideas and sentiments, as in public opinion and propaganda.<sup>7</sup>

## Conflict

A recurring phenomenon of interpersonal and intergroup relations is *tension*. Out of the tensions of contemporary life rise numerous strifes and social conflicts. These conflicts vary from those inherent in the unconscious competition of business and industrial relations to the

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Harper, 1951), chap. ix. More popular discussions are found in S. Chase, *Roads to Agreement* (New York: Harper, 1951) and A. J. Marrow, *Living without Hate* (New York: Harper, 1951). For a discussion of some sociological antecedents and equivalents of group dynamics, see R. Bain, "Action Research and Group Dynamics," *Social Forces*, 30 (1951), 1-10.

<sup>7</sup> Blumer calls attention to the "loss of self-concern" in crowd behavior. We believe that this fact helps to account for any kind of group behavior. See Blumer, "Collective Behavior," in A. McC. Lee, ed., *New Outline of the Principles of Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1946), pp. 180-181.



collective aggressions of revolutions and wars. These forms of group behavior are anchored in the dramatic changes, widespread confusions, and tangled power relationships of the twentieth century. Crises and catastrophes are dangerously close to becoming social norms. Group cleavage is rapidly replacing social cohesion. The negative and destructive consequences of these conflicts accentuate the urgency of a social-psychological understanding of their nature and their source. Social reform is not our concern in this book; but if the reduction of tensions and conflicts is a desire of all socially sensitive people, then we must give some attention to the nature of human conflict upon which any sound social reconstruction must ultimately be based.

**Intergroup Prejudice.** One of the most common manifestations of tension and conflict today is intergroup prejudice. By this term we refer to the attitude of superiority, antipathy, or rejection which members of one group hold toward those of another. We are not using this term in its etymological sense of prejudgment, although all forms of prejudice, of course, involve the act of prejudging, of forming a judgment before we have knowledge of the thing which we are evaluating. Prejudgment exists, as a matter of fact, in all forms of belief and it is not, therefore, the true mark of prejudice. For this same reason we do not use the term to describe favorable attitudes or beliefs, as when we assert that a parent is prejudiced in *favor* of his own child. As we use the term, it always involves social separation, an attitude of superiority toward "outsiders" to one's group, and, if overtly expressed, takes the form of discrimination. In view of the fact that the term is used indiscriminately, it might be well if social psychologists consistently used Bogardus's well-established concept of "social distance" (see Chapter 2).

**The sources of prejudice.** In order to determine the nature of prejudice in a group it is necessary to know something of its origin, the cultural values or norms on which it is founded, and the process by means of which it is transmitted from person to person and from group to group. The first calls for historical knowledge, the second for ethnological data, and the third for the psychology of social learning. The problem of intergroup prejudice, like all social-psychological problems, requires an interdisciplinary approach for its understanding.

To illustrate this interdisciplinary approach, we shall consider the antipathy of the white American toward the Negro. Historically, we know that some three hundred years ago the African Negro was forcefully imported to America as a slave. The white man has always looked upon the native African as an inferior species of human being, an attitude which he



has held toward all "primitive" peoples. Being a slave, the American Negro had no rights and his behavior was rigidly controlled by his white master. This treatment accentuated his alleged inferiority, thus confirming and even aggravating the white man's contempt for him. His emancipation in the middle of the nineteenth century increased the white man's prejudice against him, for now the inferior person came to be perceived as a threat to the white man's supremacy. This, in brief, is the historical root of anti-Negro prejudice in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Anthropologically, the sources of intergroup prejudice are found in ethnocentrism and cultural isolation. "In-group" feelings arise out of close contact with members of one's own group. The sharing of a common body of sentiments and the response to common social norms make for strong social cohesion and feelings of loyalty to the institutions that sanction the norms and sentiments. Anyone who does not share this body of sentiments is "different" and therefore an outsider. The outsiders constitute the "out-group," who, besides being different and strange, are perceived as a potential threat to in-group solidarity. They are, therefore, kept at arm's length, suspected, feared, or despised. Thus the African Negro in the United States was not only inferior: having a black skin and other marks of high social visibility, he disturbed the relationship of familiarity between men. He was, accordingly, rejected and denied those forms of social participation which men grant to their own "kind."

Ethnocentrism is widespread. The Negro, while generally rejected by the white group, forms attitudes of rejection toward other Negroes who do not share the same sentiments or norms, or who are placed in a different class position. Negroes share to a remarkable degree the stereotypes of Negroes held by white men. They agree with the white man concerning such widely held beliefs as that the Negro is superstitious, happy-go-lucky, and religious.<sup>9</sup> They agree that *other* Negroes are inferior. Ethnic groups tend to place themselves at the top of a hierarchy of groups even though other ethnic groups place themselves similarly. No group knowingly and willingly puts itself at the bottom of the ethnic ladder.

Psychologically speaking, prejudice, like all forms of habitual behavior,

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<sup>8</sup> For an excellent presentation of the history of anti-Negro prejudice in our country, see Naomi F. Goldstein, *The Roots of Prejudice against the Negro in the United States* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1948).

<sup>9</sup> See D. Katz and K. W. Braly, "Racial Stereotypes of 100 College Students," *J. Abn. Soc. Psychol.*, 28 (1933), 280-290; D. Katz and K. W. Braly, "Racial Stereotypes of Negro College Students," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 36 (1941), 97-102.



is learned.<sup>10</sup> We acquire it either through the influence of others or through a process of perceptual distortion and unwarranted generalizations from individual experience. The person who was once inadvertently short-changed by a Jewish merchant finds in this experience ample confirmation of the widespread stereotype of the dishonest and crafty Jew. The child may learn to dislike members of various nationalities because his parents suspect or dislike all foreigners. His acquired prejudice is not so much a product of his own experience with ethnic groups as of his influence by the dominant attitudes which prevail in his own group.<sup>11</sup> It may well be, and there is much evidence to support the belief, that most of our prejudices against Negroes and other racial and ethnic groups are learned in the foregoing manner.

Another psychological factor in the dynamics of prejudice is motivation. Prejudice is learned in part because it aids in the satisfaction of certain needs—the needs of security, prestige, and compensation for balked wishes. Life in a rapidly changing and highly competitive culture is replete with frustrations of individual needs and desires. While we do not subscribe to the extreme form of the Dollard hypothesis that frustration is always an instigation to aggression, we must accept the fact that aggression is a frequent outcome of frustration.<sup>12</sup> Those people in whom the tensions aroused by frustration can only be reduced through aggressive behavior toward others find in prejudice and discrimination a ready mode of expression. The process is facilitated by finding a suitable scapegoat. Scapegoating is a rationalized form of aggression. The frustrated individual can give full vent to his pent-up aggressions without the sense of haunting doubt and guilt which would trouble a less prejudiced and less vindictive individual. The scapegoat, who invariably represents a minority group, has no recourse, for he is usually considered dangerous because of his real or imagined threat to the prestige or security of the dominant group. He becomes an object upon whom the frustrations and aggressions of the majority are readily displaced. Thus the Negro, and more particularly the Jew, become easy targets for the frustrated and self-appointed guardians of the dominant group.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Learning, especially social learning, it will be recalled, is described in detail in chap. iv.

<sup>11</sup> See chap. vii, including the references cited, especially that of E. L. Horowitz.

<sup>12</sup> For the frustration-aggression hypothesis, see J. Dollard, *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939).

<sup>13</sup> See G. W. Allport, *The ABC's of Scapegoating* (New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1948).



An important motivational factor in prejudice is economic competition. The average individual is seldom aware that the Negro, for example, being held in an inferior economic and social position, would be looked upon as an important economic rival. Behind much of anti-Negro prejudice, nevertheless, is the fear of the Negro as a competitor. Aggressions against Negroes are known to be consequences of their success in business and professional activities.<sup>14</sup> The fear of many Southern whites to raise the educational level of the Negro is due not only to their fear that he will forget his "proper place" but that he might become a serious competitor for the white man's jobs.

The economic motive in intergroup prejudice is even more pronounced in anti-Semitism. Members of the dominant groups fear and distrust the Jew because of his vocational success, which they attribute to his alleged overaggressiveness and questionable ethical practices. Discriminations against Jews in some of our graduate and professional schools, especially in the field of medicine, are in no small degree motivated by economic competition.

Our analysis of the dynamics of intergroup prejudice reveals the fact that this phenomenon is complex and that it cannot be traced to a single source. It has a history, is an expression of in-group attitudes, and is affected by the psychology of the individual (learning, motivation, frustration, aggression, etc.).

*The extent of prejudice.* It goes without saying that we have no accurate knowledge of the full extent of intergroup prejudice in the United States. That it is extensive is attested to by careful observation, the results of public opinion polls, and by the fact that there is a large variety of minority groups in this country. According to Rose, about one third of our population belongs to minority groups.<sup>15</sup> In the midst of such heterogeneity, intergroup tensions must be widespread. In our large urban centers, particularly New York City, where an individual in his daily round of activities sees people of different color, hears numerous foreign languages and strange accents, and observes many ways of life clashing with one another, the amount of prejudice must be very large. This is not even to mention the petty irritations of those who are intolerant of people who in trivial ways differ from themselves. Thus Methodists may not worship

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<sup>14</sup> See J. Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937).

<sup>15</sup> A. M. Rose, *Studies in Reduction of Prejudice* (Chicago: American Council on Race Relations, 1947), p. 17.



with First Adventists, although both are Protestants; Republicans dislike Democrats, yet both are American voters; and physicists may have a low opinion of psychologists, even though both may be competent scholars.

Opinion polls and attitude studies give us some idea of the extent of prejudice in the United States, especially in the spheres of race relations and ethnic differentiations. The results are not as dependable as one might wish, owing to the ambiguity of questions, the difficulty of determining the veracity of the respondents, the unconscious bias of the interviewer, etc. Nevertheless, they give us some idea of the widespread character of inter-group prejudice. In a national sample of anti-Semitism, Cambell reported that about 40 per cent had unfavorable attitudes toward Jews. Even if the figure should be 50 per cent off, it would still indicate a high incidence of anti-Semitic feeling in the American population.<sup>16</sup>

The few reliable studies of anti-Negro prejudice which have been published show a high percentage of this attitude in the American population. Reporting the results of a *Fortune* poll, Horowitz shows that 80 per cent of the American white population favor the segregation of Negroes in our cities.<sup>17</sup> Allport and Kramer, in their use of life histories of college students and data from the Commission on Community Interrelations, estimate that at least four-fifths of the American people harbor feelings of group hostility.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note in passing that, according to one study at least, anti-Semitism in college increases with the income of the students' parents, Republican-party affiliation, and sorority membership.<sup>19</sup>

If the foregoing studies and estimates are reasonably dependable—and there is good reason to believe that the estimates are too low—it should be clear that intergroup prejudice, especially racial and ethnic antipathy, is alarmingly widespread in American life. One is easily startled by the basic

<sup>16</sup> For a clear case of divergent opinion-poll results the student should note that a National Opinion Research Center poll in 1943 reported that slightly over 49 per cent of the American people were anti-Semitic, whereas a *Fortune* poll in 1946 reported that slightly over 8 per cent were anti-Semitic. It would stretch the reader's credulity to the breaking point if he were asked to believe that three years could have made such a significant difference.

<sup>17</sup> E. L. Horowitz, in O. Klineberg, ed., *Characteristics of the American Negro* (New York: Harper, 1944).

<sup>18</sup> G. W. Allport and B. M. Kramer, "Some Roots of Prejudice," *J. Psychol.*, 22 (1946), 9-39. See also G. W. Allport, "The Bigot in Our Midst," *The Commonweal*, Oct. 6, 1944, 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> D. J. Levinson and R. N. Sanford, "A Scale for the Measurement of Anti-Semitism," *J. Psychol.*, 17 (1944), 339-370.



implication of this fact, namely, that the American people harbor within themselves deep and abiding hatreds and aggressions.

**Industrial Conflict.** There are few arenas of intergroup conflict in our urban society where tensions and conflicts have been more extensive, pronounced, and bitter than in modern industry. While the differences between labor and capital have been approached with increasing psychological knowledge and skill in the last two decades, they still constitute the most serious disruptive force in modern business and industry. For this reason labor-management relations, as these conflicts are often politely designated, take on great importance for the social psychologist.

Like other forms of collective phenomena, industrial conflict is rooted in the process of social change. The changes in society are reflected in the changed relationships between the worker and the owner or manager. Social change invariably brings insecurity and confusion in its wake. This insecurity and confusion arouses suspicions and antagonisms of groups toward one another, and in the industrial area it creates frustration and bitterness. Thus, here as elsewhere, when studying human behavior, we must give serious attention to the cultural background of the times as well as to the motivations of men.

The cultural background of today's industrial conflicts is extremely complicated. However, it does contain three clear-cut elements: (1) the technological character of modern industry which requires of the worker special skill; (2) the growth of labor organization with its consequent threat, as perceived by industrialists, to the power of ownership, management, and the "vested interests"; and (3) the increasing tendency of the national government to control both labor and industry, which creates ill-feeling in both groups.

It is a mistake born of ignorance of the social and motivational forces underlying conflict to attribute the disturbances in industrial relations wholly to greed and the lust for power. There is no doubt that these play an important role, but they are not in themselves a sufficient explanation. When we attribute the economic plight of the proletariat to the predatory acts of the *bourgeoisie*, or when we rationalize the capitalist's callous exploitation of the masses by the principle of *laissez-faire*, we are expressing a popular prejudice, not stating a scientific fact. In either case we forget that the members of each group *perceive* their relation to each other differently but are *motivated* by essentially the same needs: security, self-esteem, power, etc. This conclusion is in keeping with our constant emphasis of the role of cultural values and of individual needs in human be-



havior. Workers and managers, each group in its own way, are shaped by a common core of cultural influences and individual needs. If despite the similarity in cultural influences in the two groups there is nevertheless tension and hostility between them, this may be due to the fact that each is trying to achieve its ends under different conditions. The worker must satisfy his needs under the conditions created by modern technology: the speed-up production system, monotony, heightened tension and frustration, and a generally "meaningless" performance of highly specialized acts.<sup>20</sup> The employer, on the other hand, perceives in the demands of the worker for higher wages, for the closed shop, for the right to strike, etc., a threat to his own security, status, and prestige. Every time the worker presses for certain demands, the employer is inclined to resist them. Industrial conflict, like any other form of conflict, then, is based on the pursuit of similar goals but by different methods. The worker and the employer both want, say, money and the prestige that money can secure, but the former seeks them through increased wages and the latter through increased profits. Generally speaking, these two demands are difficult to reconcile.<sup>21</sup>

One might add that in the clash between management and the worker the latter is usually the greater loser. Even if one should ignore, as one cannot, the heavy toll of human suffering in the form of occupational diseases, fatigue, and accidents which are the lot of the modern worker, there is still the stubborn fact that his position in modern society is not a happy one. The modern laborer is a joyless worker, a dissatisfied individual who piles up resentments against the conditions and the people who "enslave" him. He becomes restless and restive, emotionally maladjusted, and embittered. When the conflict is expressed overtly in a strike or in sabotage, the joyless worker is most likely to be its spearhead.<sup>22</sup>

The worker's dissatisfaction is increased by fear and anxiety. Unemployment and poverty are a living specter in his life. Political conflicts, international tensions, and threats of inflation add to his woes. In desperation he agitates for change and demands action. The employer, on the other hand, fearful of the worker's organized efforts to achieve his ends, responds by accusations of "communism," "disloyalty," and "sabotage." In this the

<sup>20</sup> See R. K. Merton, "The Machine, the Worker, and the Engineer," *Science*, 105 (1947), 79-84.

<sup>21</sup> See R. Centers and H. Cantril, "Income Satisfaction and Income Aspiration," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 41 (1946), 64-69.

<sup>22</sup> For interesting discussions of the joyless worker see H. DeMan, *Joy in Work*, trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: Holt, 1929); V. E. Fisher and J. V. Hanna, *The Dissatisfied Worker* (New York: Macmillan, 1931).



industrialist is highly successful, for he has fairly well convinced the "public" that an attack by the worker upon the "capitalist system" is tantamount to an attack upon our democratic form of government. A demand for increase in wages, or a threat of collective action by an organized union, is countered by cries of "disloyalty" and a redoubled effort to resist the worker's demands.<sup>23</sup>

*The strike.* The final stage in industrial conflict and unrest is the strike. Contrary to a widespread opinion, the strike is not a sudden and violent explosion. On the contrary, it is the culmination of a series of negotiations and appeals, a process of slow accumulation of tensions. It has a definite aim, a set of rules, a hierarchy of officers, and a set of symbols consisting of slogans and stereotypes which express the aims of the striking group. Its aim is to "exert pressure upon others" in order to enforce specific demands.<sup>24</sup> While the accusation is often made that strikers are radicals or Communists bent upon overthrowing the capitalistic system, no known strike in the United States was ever instigated with this intention in mind. This accusation, and others like it, reflects the machinations and fears of those who are determined to maintain the *status quo* in which their power and safety lie. The psychological truth is that both the striking worker and the defending owner are fearful of making fundamental changes in the economic structure of American life. The strike is an attack upon the owners and employers, not upon the economic system upon which our industrial life is based. It is a technique for wresting economic advantages from the employer. If violence flares up, it is seldom if ever condoned by the striking leadership. If retaliation by the employer results in cracked skulls of workers, the outcome is incidental, not the product of a diabolical plot set up by the management.

That the strike is not a technique on the part of "class-conscious" laborers to overthrow the existing economic system is attested to by still other evidence. From the demand for higher wages, fewer hours, and better working conditions, which animated the disaffected worker in the first two decades of the present century, the strike as a power device has changed to a jealous concern for the right of collective bargaining. The wave of strikes which swept the country after the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 granted labor the right to organize was not a demand for higher wages, but expressed the organized protest of the worker against the em-

<sup>23</sup> See J. R. P. French, A. Kornhauser, and A. Marrow, "Conflict and Cooperation in Industry," *J. Soc. Issues*, 2 (1946), No. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. E. T. Hiller, *The Strike* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), p. 12.



employers who sought to forestall his efforts. The right to organize, more than the demand for higher wages, became the motivating factor in the industrial disputes of the 1930's.<sup>25</sup>

Viewed in the perspective of social organization and motivation, industrial conflict may be interpreted as a technique for channelizing personal aggressions in a permissible way. This is true of both the worker and the manager. Industrial conflict, whatever form it takes, may be loosely described as "the modern equivalent of witch burnings, crusades, etc. It is one of the approved forms of being socially angry."<sup>26</sup>

### Collective Aggression

As we have shown, both prejudice and industrial conflict are expressions of aggression. The same may be said of other forms of conflict, such as those resulting in lynching mobs and race riots. We shall limit our discussion here to those forms of collective aggression which invariably have far-reaching and frequently catastrophic effects on organized social life, namely, revolution and war.

**Revolution.** Revolution, like other forms of collective aggression, is not a simple phenomenon. It involves social, cultural, political, and economic factors.<sup>27</sup> While our concern is largely the social psychology of revolution, insofar as this can be separated from its economic and political nature and origin, a few words should be said about it as a process of social change.

*The broad features of revolution.* Revolution is popularly conceived as a sudden uprising by a group within the national state.

People invariably think of it as a state of anarchy and chaos. Actually, no revolution could take place, let alone achieve any of its objectives, if it were no more than a senseless riot of one group against another. While overt violence may flare forth suddenly, this fact is not in and of itself sufficient to describe its nature. Revolution is preceded by a history of discontent, social unrest, frustration of needs, and important changes in the attitudes and beliefs of people. It is sudden only in that the seizure of

<sup>25</sup> See D. W. Crowther, "Strikes in 1939," *Monthly Labor Rev.*, 50 (1940), 1080-1106.

<sup>26</sup> D. Krech and R. S. Crutchfield, *Theory and Problems of Social Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948), p. 558.

<sup>27</sup> For an exceptionally good brief review of revolution as a complex phenomenon the student is urged to read K. Young, *Social Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1944), chap. xiii.



power, or the change of political leadership, is perceived as a dramatic shift of authority. If violence follows this drastic change of political authority, it is because the groups in power are quick to defend their threatened position of superordination and institutional control. The revolutionary activity of the minority group is recognized for what it is: a forceful attempt to wrest from the dominant group the instruments of political and legal authority.

It is a naïve view, furthermore, to hold that revolutions are instigated by radical leaders who exploit the misery of the masses. The behavior of these leaders is limited by the field conditions which operate in a given group at a given time. These field conditions are the degree of frustration of the needs of the masses, the economic conditions of the time, the perception by the potentially revolting group of its own position of subordination, and—by no means least—the blindness of the existing power groups to the need of adjusting themselves to the profound changes that are taking place around them. Traditionalism, as reflected in the reactionary position of people in power, as well as radicalism, as reflected in the discontent of the masses, are prerequisites to the formation of revolutionary situations. Revolutions are consummated neither by the perfidy of disgruntled radicals nor by the machinations of evil capitalists, but both radicals and capitalists help to transform widespread social discontent into a revolutionary situation. Under certain conditions revolution is a normal consequence of antecedent events. It is the product of neither undue pathological conditions nor of immoral men.<sup>28</sup> It is not primarily a form of social disorganization, but of social-cultural change and group behavior.

*Social-psychological aspects of revolution.* We have already called attention to the fact that the failure of the superordinate groups in society to adjust themselves to the changing conditions of life is one cause of revolution. This fact permits us to explain revolution partly in terms of the principles of learning and perception. Revolutions are helped to birth by the failure of the dominant group to accept, or adjust themselves to, established institutional changes, changes which are brought about, not by the discontented masses, but by a complex of interrelated events. The failure of the dominant groups to accept the changes, to recondition their responses, is due neither to stupidity nor greed primarily,

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<sup>28</sup> For sources in which these views are expounded, see such works as C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1938); R. Hunter, *Revolution: Why, How, and When?* (New York: Harper, 1940); E. D. Martin, *Farewell to Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1935).



but to their strong need to retain the *status quo* in which they think their safety lies. It is a failure in achieving a new cognitive organization which will permit them to see themselves in the perspective of the present rather than of the past.

Such modern revolutions as the French and the Russian confirm our observations. As a consequence of important economic changes in the France of the eighteenth century, a new class, the *bourgeoisie*, arose. This rising middle class was perceived by the aristocracy as a threat to its own existence and its way of life. Instead of recognizing the middle class as a natural product of the changed economic conditions and according it a place in the social structure, the aristocrats denied it political status altogether. Tradition refused to yield to changes that had already occurred. In the face of their own awareness of their vital place in the French economy, of their poverty, and of the refusal of the reactionary aristocracy to yield ground, the populace became increasingly more restive and discontented. Sporadic outbreaks of rioting and mob behavior took place and before long became widespread. The final revolution was but the culmination of these conditions.

In the Russian Revolution of 1917 a similar developmental course is in evidence. Unable to learn from the abortive attempts of the people after the Crimean War and again after the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 to seize power, the nobility and the aristocracy of Russia blindly and cruelly resisted all efforts by the dispossessed to improve their lot. The Bolshevik seizure of power, after the Mensheviks' failure to exploit their victory, was but the successful culmination of a long struggle between opposing groups.

The *role of attitudes* is another psychological factor of great significance in revolutionary struggles. Profound social changes invariably produce changes in the attitudes of people. The revolution itself is an overt expression of changing social values and attitudes. In the years following the abortive revolution after the Crimean War to the successful seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the Russian people had experienced a profound change in attitude. From an almost blind devotion to their religious institutions and a naïve trust in the benevolence of the Tsar, the Russian people developed hatred and distrust for the degenerate priests and the decadent Romanoffs.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> According to some writers, the Tsarist regime collapsed, not so much because of the pressure from the revolutionaries, as because of its own inner weakness. An element of internal weakness is probably present in all forms of government that are overthrown. See W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1935), Vol. I, pp. 96-97.



What were the sources of these changed attitudes? We have already called attention to the fact that many of our aggressions are due to repressions and frustrations. In the same manner, the changed attitudes that may lead to revolutionary behavior can be traced to continued frustration and repression of important needs and interests of people. When repressions and deprivations are the never-ending lot of the masses of people, their tensions will mount to the breaking point. In Russia this occurred in 1917, first in the seizure of power by the Mensheviks (minority), and later by the Bolsheviks (majority).<sup>30</sup> Tsarist rule was a barrier to the satisfaction of some of the most elemental needs of the Russian people, particularly food, self-preservation, and a minimum of personal autonomy. In the face of these frustrations large masses of people were ready to rise up against the source of their oppression.<sup>31</sup>

The changes in attitude are seldom clearly recognized by the masses themselves. Their crystallization, and particularly their articulation, are for the most part the work of a small group of agitators. The *role of leadership* is an important factor in the social psychology of revolution. This leadership rests largely with the detached intellectuals who engage in agitation for change, or who serve as tacticians who direct the plan of action, especially in the early phases of revolutionary development. Their main function, however, is to verbalize the discontent of the masses, to encourage them in participating in revolutionary activities, and to give sympathetic support to them. This "desertion of the intellectuals" to the side of the oppressed has always added great strength to revolutionary movements.<sup>32</sup> Brinton has shown that many of the leading supporters and agitators of the French Revolution, especially the Jacobins, were outstanding men. Among them were Robespierre, Danton, and Lavoisier. Some even were noblemen, like Lafayette and the Duke of Orleans, Condorcet, and Mirabeau. The Russian Revolution, while fought by the masses, was planned and executed by men of middle class and intellectual background. In Russia, as Young points out, "the line of philosophic, literary, political,

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<sup>30</sup> See L. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 3 vols. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), Vol. I, p. 76. We remind the reader, however, that these pent-up aggressions themselves might have been ineffectual in the absence of the moral vacuum which characterized the ruling classes. Trotsky implies as much when he calls attention to the important fact that the armed Cossacks, hitherto the Emperor's most loyal fighters, gave evidence of backing the people. See *ibid.*, Vol I, p. 104.

<sup>31</sup> See L. P. Edwards, *The Natural History of Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), pp. 2-4.

<sup>32</sup> See Brinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-60.



and economic writers, from Gogol and Pushkin through Tolstoy and Kropotkin, to Gorky, Lenin, and Trotsky runs like a thread through the complex social pattern of Russia for nearly a hundred years."<sup>33</sup> The novels of Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevski are replete with the theme of social reform. While many of the ideas expressed by the intellectuals are often impractical, most of them are sincere expressions of the need for a better world.

Because the intellectual helps to shape public opinion, his defection from the ruling classes almost invariably speeds up the process of revolution, even though his role in the revolutionary movement may go unrecognized.<sup>34</sup> Lest the student erroneously concludes that the leader or intellectual is the driving force of a revolution, however, we must remind him once more that the leader is only the articulator and coordinator, not the cause, of revolutionary developments. Unless the conditions of unrest, discontent, and suffering by an outraged public exist, unless, that is, there already exists a social malady, the intellectual leaders will make little or no progress.<sup>35</sup>

We have described the revolutionary leader as a detached intellectual. He usually has ideals which are at variance with those of the social world in which he lives. For this reason he is almost invariably misunderstood and unappreciated. He is sincerely devoted to improving man's lot, and seldom exploits the masses for his own benefit. There are men, however, who arise in revolutionary situations who are unquestionably maladjusted individuals. These come from the ranks of the malcontents, rather than from the group of intellectuals whom we have described. While we have no statistical data on the incidence of mental disorder among these individuals, the number who for this reason agitate the masses and take active part in revolutionary activities is probably large. It may be that most dominant political figures are possessed of paranoic characteristics.<sup>36</sup> At any rate, the possession of a rebellious and vengeful spirit is common to such revolutionaries as Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini.<sup>37</sup> The discontent and rebelliousness which swept China led to the Taiping Rebellion of 1850 under the paranoic leadership of a religious fanatic who claimed to represent God. Despite his

<sup>33</sup> Young, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>34</sup> Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-50.

<sup>35</sup> See R. Filop-Miller, *Leaders, Dreamers, and Rebels* (New York: Viking, 1935).

<sup>36</sup> See C. S. Bluemel, *War, Politics, and Insanity* (Denver: World Press, 1950), chap. viii.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.



fanaticism—or maybe because of it?—he succeeded in ruling a large segment of the Chinese people for a number of years.<sup>38</sup>

Cases could easily be multiplied, but they all point to the same conclusion, namely, that many revolutionary leaders are either obsessive-compulsive or paranoid individuals. Revolutionary activities seldom originate in the minds of timid nonconformists; they are usually hatched by dominant individuals who with consummate skill express their discontent and anger.

**War.** War is a supreme example of collective effort and the most destructive form of collective aggression. Books on war are often multi-volume analyses, dealing with the whole complex of causes and the institutional, economic, and psychological nature of armed conflict. There is overwhelming evidence that war is not a product of the selfish and evil nature of man, of an instinct of pugnacity, of corrupt governments, or of godless men. To attribute it to any of these causes is to betray a woeful ignorance of the institutional character of war and the social nature of man.

*War is not innate.* It is an old and widely held view that man is innately warlike. Yet the majority of contemporary social psychologists agree that man is not naturally warlike. In 1944 a large group of psychologists expressed their conviction that "No race, nation, or social group is inevitably warlike."<sup>39</sup> War, they pointed out, is not born in men; it is stamped into them through the manipulation of attitudes, training, and learning.

Much can be learned about the social-psychological character of war from the attitudes concerning it by nonliterate people. Warfare is far from being universal in simple societies. As a matter of fact, there is some reason to believe that warfare is characteristic mainly of complex and advanced civilizations.<sup>40</sup> The early Eskimos are frequently cited as examples of people among whom warfare was absent.<sup>41</sup> Hobhouse and his co-workers, in their well-known work on the material culture of primitive people, call attention to a number of nonliterate societies in which war was unknown.<sup>42</sup> In their monumental study of the institutions of various

<sup>38</sup> See B. M. Allen, *Gordon in China* (London: Macmillan, 1933).

<sup>39</sup> "The Psychologists' Manifesto," in T. M. Newcomb and E. L. Hartley, eds., *Readings in Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1947), p. 656.

<sup>40</sup> See an interesting analysis of this problem in C. Letourneau, *La Guerre dans les Diverses Races Humaines* (Paris: L. Bataille, 1895).

<sup>41</sup> See F. Nansen, *Eskimo Life*, Eng. trans. (London: Longmans, 1893).

<sup>42</sup> L. T. Hobhouse, G. C. Wheeler, and M. Ginsberg, *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1930).



societies, Sumner and Keller came to the conclusion that war and other forms of aggression are socially derived, not biologically determined.<sup>43</sup>

In those primitive societies where aggressive violence resembling war is sanctioned, it differs radically from the wars of Western civilization, and in many cases the most generous or forced definition of war would be required in order to compare its forms to those of modern society. In some groups wars are no more than raiding parties. Thus the Zuñis used to raid their neighboring tribes for sheep. The Wyandots raided other tribes for women and children in order to maintain a balance in their population. In many societies, according to Hobbhouse and his associates, raids on other people are motivated by wife-capture rather than by pugnacity or warlikeness.<sup>44</sup>

Frequently the forms of aggressive behavior of primitive people are token activities and games, not destructive acts. They are based on social convention rather than on innate pugnacity. Head-hunting, for instance, was practiced as a means of enhancing one's status. A head was in essence a badge which enhanced its owner's prestige. The potlatch of the Kwakiutl, which we have already described in Chapter 9, is a technique of humbling an enemy.<sup>45</sup> The Iroquois used to engage in "little wars" to enable their young warriors to get practice.<sup>46</sup>

Orthodox psychoanalysts have consistently stressed the biological origin of aggression, including war. The "death instinct" has played an important role in their discussions of human behavior, especially since World War I. The group of "revisionists," however, especially Horney, Fromm, and Kardiner, have strongly emphasized its cultural and "situational" origin.<sup>47</sup>

*The social nature of war.* War is a stupendous undertaking which few persons, if any, can grasp as a whole collective phenomenon.

The conception of war as a battle fought between individuals who

<sup>43</sup> W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society*, 4 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), Vol. IV, pp. 368-369.

<sup>44</sup> Hobbhouse, *et al.*, *op. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> I. Goldman, "The Kwakiutl of Vancouver Island," in M. Mead, ed., *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1937), p. 188.

<sup>46</sup> Cited in O. Klineberg, *Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, 1940), pp. 79-80.

<sup>47</sup> See K. Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1939); A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), and *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945). In fairness to Freud it should be pointed out that in his last major revision of his theory he came to look upon both the life instinct and the death instinct, not as biological realities, but as ideal constructs (*mythische Wesen*). See S. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1933), p. 131.



hate each other is too patently false to deserve our attention. That there is hatred—sheer brutal hatred—is too obvious to deny. But the actual inception of war, the spark that begins the conflagration, is found in the collective hatreds expressed in the national cabinets, the war councils, and the verbal barrages of organized propaganda long before they are drained off on the battlefield by men who may not even know why they are trying to exterminate their “enemies.” The collective hatreds themselves are aroused over issues which have no immediate connection with a fighting impulse, namely, conflicts of economic, political, and national interests. These conflicts are supported by intense psychological factors, such as national pride, honor, prestige, and even by the whims and vanities of emperors, kings, and presidents.

In all armed conflicts there is a psychological base. If men are aroused to hatred and the use of force against other nations, it is not only because society sanctions them, but also because man has stored up in himself animosities which he developed in his early interpersonal relationships. In our discussion of the socialization of the child (Chapter 4), we pointed out that the child will resist the efforts of his parents and others to restrain his activities. In the process of growing up, the child experiences many frustrations at the hands of others. These frustrations create resentment and hostility toward those people who interfere with his strivings. While many of these resentments are repressed, they may, under certain circumstances, be directed toward others. It is often only a short step from hostility toward members of one's family to aggressiveness toward people in other classes, or of different color, or of different nationality. By this time the habit of aggression is well learned, and under the influence of propaganda which warns him of the threat, real or fabricated, to his nation, the individual casts his hatred upon his country's enemy. He can now hate without limit. For his aggressive behavior is given a socially sanctioned outlet. Hatred is cultivated in a pre-existing soil and the basest human impulses are fostered for use against the enemy.

In time of war the individual's welfare is more drastically subordinated than at any other time to the preservation of his group and the enhancement of its glory. In the last analysis, the individual counts for nothing; his chief responsibility is to give all to his country, even if that means what he loves most dearly—his own life. It is this realization, a condition never so obvious in time of peace, that lies at the basis of man's ferocity on the battlefield. While officially he fights for God and country, in the jungle of bursting shells and bristling bayonets he fights for himself. There is in this supreme effort a deep-seated ambivalence. He directs his primordial affect-



tions toward his own group and vents his inordinate hatred upon the out-group. The comradeship of men faced by a common enemy and a deep-seated hatred for him are well known. The American soldier in World War II fought the Japanese with a ferocity which was not generally equaled on other battlefronts. The in-group solidarity of the American, and his boundless hatred for the Japanese soldier, was largely a product of the intense personal combats in which the latter's unpredictable trickery played an important part. Under these circumstances the killing of Japanese soldiers became a pleasure and a relief from frightful tension.

Our discussion has brought out the fact that war is essentially a social phenomenon, a collective undertaking unmatched in complexity. It has no single origin. Psychologically, it is a form of collective violence which, while conditioned by cultural, economic, and national differences, is supported at every turn by individual antipathies. Individual aggression may lead to personal combat and murder, but it does not lead to war. War is collective aggression, i.e., individual aggression interpersonally transmitted to form a field, and instigated by economic competition, racial or cultural antipathies, and national rivalries.

### The Reduction of Group Tensions

In our consideration of group tensions, we have limited our discussion to intergroup prejudice, industrial conflict, and collective aggression as displayed in revolution and war. In this section we shall give some attention to the reduction of such prejudice, conflict, and aggression.

**Reducing Prejudice.** Prejudice, we have seen, is a collective phenomenon. As such it can be effectively combatted only through collective effort. A hopeful sign in this connection is the fact that numerous organizations have been established in the past few years to bring about a better understanding of intergroup relations and to eradicate the sources of prejudice. It is too early to evaluate their effectiveness, but they have made encouraging progress. This progress has in part been made possible by the increased knowledge of group differences, especially those of race and nationality. It has been further supported by scientific research into the causes of intergroup tensions and conflicts. The Commission on Community Interrelations, for instance, has strongly emphasized the inseparability of social research and social engineering. Organizations like the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Bureau of Intercultural Education, and the National Negro Congress are actively engaged



in various efforts to improve intergroup understanding and reduce prejudice and hostility.<sup>48</sup>

It seems fairly clear that conventional education, which merely provides knowledge of intergroup differences, is not effective in eradicating prejudice. There is some evidence that higher education may actually reinforce an attitude of superiority toward various ethnic or racial groups, and thereby propagate intolerance of their members.<sup>49</sup> Intellectual understanding without emotional acceptance of members of minority groups is insufficient to eradicate prejudice against them. Interactions involving contacts between members of different groups has thus far been the most successful technique for intergroup acceptance. People of different races and nationalities, when thrown together on jobs where frequent contacts are necessary, come to accept one another more readily. These contacts soon lead to other, less job-related, interactions, such as eating together and visiting together.<sup>50</sup> Generally speaking, differences between groups are gradually ignored as their members, through normal contacts with one another, lose their fears and suspicions.

#### Industrial Peace.

The reduction of conflict in industry has been aided by two developments. The first was the organization of labor into unions, which has given the worker a more advantageous bargaining power with industry; the second, and more recent development, has been an increasing share by labor in policy- and decision-making. The right of collective bargaining is an important psychological force which has given the worker increased dignity and has made him more important in the industrial scheme of contemporary society. Through collective bargaining the worker has been able to wrest from his employer various concessions which have not only brought about greater satisfaction to the worker but increased production for the employer. We are now in possession of valuable data on this subject. These data have been discovered by numerous researchers on the subject of labor-management relations, beginning with the pioneer contributions of Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For a review and appraisal of organizational efforts in tension reduction see R. M. Williams, Jr., *The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947), No. 57, chap. ii. For a summary of the work of the Commission on Community Interrelations, see its *Facts on Friction*, 1946, No. 9.

<sup>49</sup> B. Samelson, "Does Education Diminish Prejudice?" *J. Soc. Issues*, 1 (1945), 11-13.

<sup>50</sup> See B. Mackenzie, "The Importance of Contact in Determining Attitudes toward Negroes," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 43 (1948), 417-441.

<sup>51</sup> See particularly F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson, *Management and the*



These studies call attention to the great importance of social-psychological factors in worker-management relationships, particularly motivation, perception, security, and independence. A worker wants to be appreciated and understood by his fellow worker and by his employer. Our study of both the individual and the group has demonstrated that man is surrounded by a social field of other people, and that the stimulus of others is one of the most important factors in group formation and collective behavior. The impact of social forces, be they economic, political, or broadly cultural, invariably takes place through the behavior of other people.<sup>52</sup> Man does not work for money only; he also desires respect, dignity, and meaningful associations with other people.<sup>53</sup> When industrial leaders recognize these needs and act to fulfill them, they add decisively to industrial morale and the reduction of avoidable friction.

**Reducing Collective Aggression.** There are cynics who hold that war and revolution, like poverty and crime, will always be with us.

In a measure, perhaps, they are right. Nevertheless, man is today in possession of sufficient knowledge to permit him to settle class conflicts amicably, and to reduce the dangers of war considerably.

The forces that aid in the reduction of industrial conflict will figure enormously in forestalling revolutionary activities. A satisfied worker is less likely than a frustrated and oppressed one to agitate for the overthrow of the existing socioeconomic order. A management that is sensitive to the human needs of its employees will not embitter them to the point where they will seek to destroy it. If recent studies of the social life of animals and men are reliable, then cooperation rather than struggle is the "law" of life. Men thrive better, are happier and better adjusted, when they live together cooperatively. Struggle and conflict are not only divisive; they impair individual and social growth as well.<sup>54</sup>

The implication of the foregoing observation is that the social welfare of the masses of people is the key to the reduction, and possibly the elimination, of collective outbreaks. We have seen that when men's security is threatened and their anxiety is increased by unemployment, poverty, and

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*Worker* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939) and F. J. Roethlisberger, *Management and Morale* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941).

<sup>52</sup> See D. McGregor, "Conditions of Effective Leadership in the Industrial Organization," in T. M. Newcomb and E. L. Hartley, eds., *Readings in Social Psychology*, p. 427.

<sup>53</sup> See Roethlisberger, *Management and Morale*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>54</sup> See W. C. Allee, *The Social Life of Animals* (New York: Norton, 1938) and A. Adler, *Social Interest: A Challenge to Mankind* (New York: Putnam, 1939).



deep frustrations on their jobs, their "normal" hostilities and hatreds are intensified. When life becomes unbearable and men are convinced that they have nothing to lose but their chains, as Karl Marx phrased it, they will not hesitate to engage in violent behavior against those whom they perceive to be responsible for their unhappy lot. The welfare to which we refer cannot be achieved by a selfish competitive individualism, but by concerted efforts of labor and management for the benefit of all.

Can international tensions, particularly armed conflict, be reduced or eliminated? Insofar as wars are fostered by intergroup prejudices and hatreds, they can be prevented. Men's attitudes toward men of other races and nationalities can be changed. Contact in particular, as we have seen, is an important aid in breaking down racial and ethnic barriers. Since attitudes are acquired in social interaction, it is very important to inculcate acceptance and understanding of different peoples in the plastic years of childhood. Most of our prejudices toward people of other races and nationalities, as we saw in Chapter 7, are acquired during childhood.

We can learn something also from past treatment of vanquished nations by the victors. Instead of imposing our own conception of life on them, we should let them determine their own destiny. A defeated nation that is treated as an inferior whose people must do penance for their leaders' transgressions, will accumulate hatreds which may burst out in hostilities later. "No people," as some recent psychologists have pointed out, "can long tolerate such injuries to self-respect."<sup>55</sup> The peoples of defeated nations must be given an opportunity to participate in their own reconstruction. They must be given an opportunity, as soon as conditions permit, to take their rightful places in the family of nations. It is only through mutual respect and cooperation that nations, like individuals, can live in peace with one another.<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed the main "facts" about group conflicts and tensions. We have tried to show that these phenomena, like other forms of group behavior, can be described and interpreted by means of categories derived from the study of the behavior of the individual in society. This

<sup>55</sup> "The Psychologists' Manifesto," in Newcomb and Hartley, *op. cit.*, p. 656.

<sup>56</sup> See M. Ashley-Montagu, *On Being Intelligent* (New York: Schuman, 1951), for an interesting discussion of cooperation as a means for eliminating discord from human relations.



fact reinforces the claim made throughout this book that the person and the group are inseparable. The ethnological data which we have used, and the field-theoretical position which has guided our thinking, have amply demonstrated their inseparability. The common denominator of both individual and group behavior is the social character of each. Both are products of social interaction, and both are, but in very different degrees, culturally conditioned.

Intergroup tensions are widespread in the world. In the United States alone these tensions and the conflicts to which they lead are persistent and serious social problems. They point up the need for social psychologists and other social scientists to re-examine them in the light of contemporary research. If social psychologists have to date given us little reliable knowledge concerning the basic sources of these conflicts, it is not only because the problem is inordinately difficult and complex, but even more because careful research has only begun. If they have succeeded even less in forging techniques for reducing or eliminating them, it is not because they lack imagination, but because obscurantism and powerful vested interests have successfully blocked their efforts. Research and action programs based upon it are construed as dangerous by the reactionary but usually powerful groups in our society.

Finally, no action program for the reduction of intergroup tensions can succeed unless certain social preconditions exist. The revolutions, depressions, and wars of the past thirty years should have taught us that there can be little intergroup solidarity and social harmony if people are generally insecure and deeply frustrated. We know that people will discharge their aggressions in violence when their basic biological and social needs are chronically left unsatisfied. We need not accept in its extreme formulation Dollard's hypothesis that frustration is an instigator to aggression in order to accept the preceding statement. Society is replete with evidence to confirm it.<sup>57</sup> Reduction of group conflicts depends in the final analysis upon two important conditions: the eradication of those economic, social, and political conditions which engender widespread anxieties and animosities, and the socialization of the child in such a manner as to arouse a minimum of ambivalence and aggression (see Chapters 4, 10). Any expectation of social harmony which ignores these elementary conditions is foredoomed to failure.

<sup>57</sup> See further, "Summary: Public Relations Workshop, September 27-29, 1946," (Chicago: American Council on Race Relations, 1947).



## CHAPTER 14 :

# Mass

# Behavior

NOWHERE IS THE individual-psychological factor in collective action more evident than in mass behavior. Unlike crowd behavior, which it resembles, and in which the individual "loses" himself in irrational and often violent activities, mass behavior is determined largely by individual needs and individual lines of interest. While a mass may act in concert when the individual lines of interest converge, the important thing is that mass behavior results from the disturbances, strivings, and dissatisfactions of many individuals. Mass movements, fads, fashions, propaganda, and the like, although appealing to persons as members of groups (as proletarians, customers, party members, etc.), reach them ultimately as individuals. Even though the individuals respond to and act upon the same stimulus, they may be widely separated in space. Unlike crowd behavior, in which the individuals are spatially contiguous, mass behavior is character-



ized by the fact that the individuals who are for the most part isolated from one another are nevertheless interdependent. The interdependence of individuals renders them relatively homogeneous and thereby responsive to the same stimulus-situation. Aided by modern techniques of mass communication, such as the newspaper, radio, and television, the individuals are easily aroused to action by the same appeals of persuasion, propaganda, exhortation, salesmanship, etc.

### The Setting of Mass Behavior

Like most forms of group action, mass behavior is found largely in complex and changing societies. The collective behavior of primitive people, as we saw in the preceding chapter, is for the most part organized behavior. It is precipitated and sustained by a set of customs and rules, and by an established leadership. In his ritualistic and ceremonial behavior each individual in the group is acting upon a body of tradition in which he can anticipate each step in advance, for every act is prescribed and known. His behavior is, in short, institutionalized rather than spontaneous.

Mass, like crowd, behavior, on the other hand, is widespread in modern mass society. Mass society is characteristically urban and industrial, pervaded by impersonal relationships, specialization of function, and unceasing change. These conditions breed personal insecurity, restlessness, and a deep sense of aloneness. The impersonality and specialization isolate man from his fellows and heighten his insecurity. To overcome his feeling of aloneness, man is easily swayed by any force, however emotional and irrational it may be, that promises to give him security and a measure of the warmth that comes from close ties with others. He seeks crowds, loses himself in publics and audiences, and attains vicarious intimacy and solidarity in the folklore of escape (see Chapter 8).

When men live in troublous times, when they are deprived of a basic or elemental security, when they feel lonely and incomplete, they become increasingly suggestible and irrational. Thus, while men were not so pervasively bombarded by panaceas, or so constantly manipulated by clever demagogues in other times as they are today, when the conditions of life held little hope of satisfaction and security, they engaged in strange and unbelievable behavior. The social epidemics of the Middle Ages illustrate some of the extreme forms of mass behavior. Haunted by fears and insecurities of the times, men were seized with overpowering desires for holy things. To satisfy their desires, they formed themselves into crusades to



the Holy Land. These began as early as the eleventh century and continued through the thirteenth. Men also indulged in masochistic orgies in which they lacerated their bodies with unbelievable cruelty. These orgies were followed by a century of "dancing manias," in which whole communities, throughout Europe were seized by an irresistible impulsion to dance.<sup>1</sup> By the sixteenth century, and lasting for almost two hundred years, Europe was so haunted by fear of devils and witches that they tortured and killed thousands of innocent women who were accused of possessing demonic powers. The fear of witches spread to the American colonies, where men acted in the same irrational manner toward the accused.<sup>2</sup>

Hysterical speculations in land and other "get-rich-quick" schemes have been numerous in the last two centuries. They exhibit the same psychological factors that explain the manias of earlier times. The South Sea Bubble, gold rushes to California and Alaska, and the Florida land boom of the 1920's are well-known examples of mass hysteria. They had behind them the same sort of restlessness, insecurity, and search for the unattainable that characterized the other forms of mass behavior.

In broadest terms, then, mass behavior arises on a background of personal anonymity, social detachment, moral confusion, and the frustration of basic human wishes. This state makes for anxiety and hypersuggestion, for the old and comfortable moorings of a large segment of the population have been irreparably weakened or destroyed. The detached and alienated individuals, accordingly, as Blumer points out, "are likely to be confused and uncertain in their actions." Being unable at the same time, as he asserts, "to communicate with one another, except in limited and imperfect ways, the members of the mass are forced to act separately, as individuals."<sup>3</sup> The condition of uprootedness makes the individual totally unconcerned about the welfare of others, and he acts irrationally and selfishly because the old and relatively stable set of values plays little or no part in his behavior. This is the picture of "mass" man acting in "mass" society. It suggests that mass behavior may be an early symptom of social disorganization. In an unstable society, where human needs are chronically left unsatisfied, the urgency to relate oneself to others is frustrated. In mass behavior man seeks

<sup>1</sup> See J. F. C. Hecker, *Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages* (New York: Twentieth Century Publishing Company, n.d.) and B. Sidis, *The Psychology of Suggestion* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1898).

<sup>2</sup> See G. L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), chaps. ii, xviii.

<sup>3</sup> H. Blumer, "Collective Behavior," in A. McC. Lee, ed., *New Outline of the Principles of Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1946), p. 186.



to regain the sense of solidarity and close identification "which has become dissipated in the atomistic massing of people with values that stress individual power, initiative, and rationality."<sup>4</sup>

### Crowd Behavior and Mass Behavior

The beginning student is often confused by the tendency of many social psychologists to treat the crowd as a form of mass behavior.

The crowd has, of course, some features of mass behavior. At the same time there are certain fundamental differences which justify their separation into relatively distinct forms of group behavior. The fact that the two have some common features does not establish their identity; it merely calls attention to the fact that the crowd, like the mass, is a collective grouping in which people act together in response to a common stimulus-situation.

**Basic Features of Crowd Behavior.** The most elementary characteristic of crowd behavior is that the members who compose a crowd are reacting to a common stimulus within a circumscribed spatial milieu. They have direct interactional contact with one another. The common stimulus is any object or situation which produces some degree of psychological tension in the members of the crowd. To the extent that in their excitement their self-control is weakened, they are in the process of crowd formation. The tension which each person feels takes on a circular character whereby it is spontaneously transmitted to every member almost simultaneously. The collective response is a "milling" process in which there is a self-intensification by each of his own emotional state as he finds it reflected in others. This milling is a state of heightened suggestibility and largely accounts for the irrational, often violent, behavior of people in a crowd. We have already had occasion to refer to this aspect of group behavior, for it is basic to most forms of collective action. It consists in the reduction, and at times the complete obliteration, of self-consciousness. As we have shown in the preceding chapter, when self-consciousness weakens, our critical faculties become largely inoperative, and our behavior loses its conventional circumspection. Under these conditions, and aided by the anonymity which a crowd usually bestows upon its members, ordinary restraints are easily relaxed or discarded altogether.

The contagious excitement of the crowd usually leads to active behavior. The very condition of psychological tension impels people to action as a

<sup>4</sup> K. Young, *Social Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1914), p. 410.



way of relieving their excitement. Action is encouraged and accelerated by the appearance of a stereotype or image which gives focus to the behavior of the individual members by supplying them with a fixed goal. Thus, the violent behavior of lynchers in a mob is directed toward the goal of hanging a victim by the stereotype of the Negro as a threat to the white man's superiority. Insofar as every member of the crowd or mob shares the same image or stereotype, the crowd is moved by a common objective.

While these features of crowd behavior are conventionally described as separate steps in the process of crowd formation, it is artificial to analyze it in this fashion. The various features form a continuous process, each being but an aspect of the behavior of a collective unit. Only the last feature, that of acting upon the shared image or stereotype, is not always present. Its presence invariably defines an *active* crowd, best exemplified by a lynching mob.

*Kinds of crowds.* The clearest and most useful classification of crowds has been proposed by Blumer, an authority on collective behavior.<sup>5</sup> We shall use his classification in the present section.

The *casual* crowd is short-lived, loosely organized, and motivated by the attraction of the moment. A group of "window-shoppers," scarcely cognizant of one another, but attracted by the same stimulus-situation, illustrates this type.

The *conventionalized* crowd is one whose activities are directed by conventional rules or expectations. The behavior of this type is less spontaneous than that of the casual crowd, and is more subject to the influence of cultural expectancies. Thus, the spectators at a football game, while acting with considerable freedom, are subject to the demands of cheering, rooting, and the antics of the cheer leader or the drum major. In this connection it is interesting to note the differential behavior of Americans and Chinese. At a football game to which visiting Chinese military officers were invited as guests, their behavior was markedly different from that of the native spectators. When one of the writer's former students asked them how they liked the game, one of the officers replied, "We were very embarrassed by the shouting." Their own behavior during the game was marked by placidity and an expressionless self-control. While they were physically present, they were not psychologically a part of the crowd. Their behavior did not follow the conventions of American football crowds.

An *acting* crowd is an aggressive crowd, a crowd that acts toward a definite goal. There is in this form a marked subordination of the indi-

<sup>5</sup> For this classification see H. Blumer, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-185.



vidual's wishes to the demands and objectives of the group. A lynching mob is a good example of this type.

An *expressive* crowd is one that has no clearly defined goal; or one might say, paradoxically, that its goal is expression for its own sake. It gets what psychological unity it has from the collective shouting, laughing, wailing, or dancing which are its marked characteristics. Certain religious sects, such as the "Holy Rollers," and orgiastic cults illustrate this type of crowd.

### Characteristic Features of Mass Behavior.

We have referred to the tendency to think of the crowd as a form of mass behavior. This tendency is in part well-founded, for crowd and mass behavior, as we have seen, have certain features in common. Like crowd behavior, mass behavior is in most cases spontaneous. People in a mass, that is, are loosely organized and have no clear-cut understandings to guide their behavior. In this sense both crowd and mass behavior are elementary, i.e., unregulated, group activity. Both are characterized by the anonymity of the members, groups in which people generally do not know one another and almost never intimately. Anonymity is an important factor in all group behavior, for if persons know one another in a group they are more circumspect in their behavior. In the anonymity of the crowd or mass, inhibitions are markedly relaxed, for there is little fear in each person of criticism and disapproval by others. If a member of a lynching mob were suddenly confronted by an intimate friend, his self-consciousness would be aroused, he would become more circumspect, and he might withdraw from active participation in the violent behavior of the mob.

While they have common characteristics, mass behavior differs from crowd behavior in clearly defined ways. In the first place, participants in mass behavior are spatially separated from one another. While interaction takes place, it is usually characterized by impersonality and social distance. It is difficult under these conditions to develop strong rapport among the members, and there is little possibility of establishing the degree of unity that is found in the crowd. In the second place, because of the spatial separation of individuals and the absence of rapport, participation in mass behavior attracts all kinds of people. The crusades of the Middle Ages were composed of people from many walks of life: princes, scholars, merchants, peasants, beggars, and thieves. The witch-hunts of American colonists were engaged in by farmers, artisans, judges, and preachers. All of them were infected by the same social epidemic, the same irrational fears and abnormal hatreds. Mass behavior, finally, by virtue of the physical separation of its members and their weak rapport, is characterized by individualized action. Each member, although subject to the influence of the mass, behaves



to a greater extent than in the crowd in accordance with his own desires. Together its members do not so readily form a face-to-face group, and each can, accordingly, achieve greater freedom of thought and action. If they act as a collective unit or mass, it is because every individual separately finds in its activities some hope of satisfying his own hopes and needs.

Because of the foregoing characteristics, mass behavior has become a widespread feature of contemporary life. More than any society of the past, contemporary civilization is marked by those conditions which most readily give rise to mass behavior. Under the secondary forms of relationship, in which men's contact with one another is external and detached, they readily form large masses of interdependent but isolated individuals. They have moved from "crowd-mindedness" to "mass-mindedness"—to a condition, that is, in which they are swayed in large masses in the form of publics, audiences, and social movements, by mass leaders and the techniques of mass communication.

Having now described in some detail the nature of mass behavior and compared it with the behavior of the crowd to which it is closely related, we are ready to examine some of its characteristic manifestations.

## Rumor

The instability of contemporary society and its upsetting crises make a rich soil for a widespread circulation of rumor. It seems incredible that in an age when newspapers and other media of communication are accessible to everyone rumor should be as extensive as it is. Rumor feeds on ignorance and paucity of information. When these conditions exist, and men are troubled by crises and social unrest, they inadvertently fill the gaps in their knowledge with fancied explanations. In times of war or the threat of war, rumor-mongering takes on a more sinister aspect. It is then deliberately created by various groups in order to spread confusion, break down the enemy's morale, and incite panic among soldiers and civilians alike. When rumor is deliberately created in this manner, its psychological motive is no longer merely to fill the gaps in men's knowledge, but to create crises and social unrest.

**Fundamental Characteristics of Rumor.** According to Allport and Postman, rumor has two characteristics: *importance* and *ambiguity*.<sup>6</sup> Rumor is seldom circulated about trivial matters. It con-

<sup>6</sup> G. W. Allport and L. Postman, *The Psychology of Rumor* (New York: Holt, 1947), pp. 33-34.



cerns events and deeds which are important to individuals and groups, matters in which there is sufficient ego-involvement and belief-value to arouse tension or anxiety in people. When people have factual information in which they have full confidence, they are not likely to be swayed by hearsay. The degree of credulity regarding rumor is in proportion to the ambiguity of the proposition offered for belief and the degree of its importance. Thus, during World War II—and this was true of previous wars in modern times—husbands and wives were easily upset by rumors concerning the marital infidelity of their spouses. There was a widespread belief in the South that American Negro soldiers were returning to the United States with their weapons to overthrow the white man's domination. Nothing was said about how the Negro would manage to bring his weapons back to his home, or about the source of the ammunition that would make them effective. The whole situation was sufficiently ambiguous to permit people to supply their own answers. Since, moreover, the Negro is a constant source of anxiety to the Southern white man, the rumor had great importance to the latter, for it sustained and confirmed his deepest prejudices. Allport and Postman refer to this supporting quality of rumor as the process of *assimilation*, a "powerful attractive force exerted upon rumor by the intellectual and emotional context existing in the listener's mind."<sup>7</sup>

**The Place of Motivation in Rumor.** In our over-all view of mass behavior we called attention to the fact that it is initiated and sustained by individual needs, hopes, and anxieties. Like all human behavior, rumor derives its impelling energy from strong motivation. It satisfies emotional and intellectual needs. The individual who spreads gossip over the back fence is, without knowing the reason for his behavior, attempting to satisfy an insatiable curiosity, settle a grudge against his neighbor, or impress his listeners with his "secret" knowledge. In this way the rumor monger can relieve his tensions by attacking what he hates and, since his hearers are impelled by similar motives, justify his act as well. As Allport and Postman so well put it, "rumor rationalizes while it relieves."<sup>8</sup>

The motives underlying rumor are numerous. They can, nevertheless, be reduced to a few. Among these, curiosity, hope, fear, hatred, and hostility are the most common. Men can be so curious about something while lacking adequate knowledge that they will invent answers to satisfy their needs. Uncertainty arouses tensions, and so an answer must be found. The gap between knowledge and ignorance must be filled, and rumor will usually

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.



bridge it. Thus, when the ailing wealthy widow dies and leaves her fortune to her physician, the rumor spreads that he hastened her death in order to get her money. "The wish is father to the thought," says a proverb. Men can desire something so strongly that they will fabricate rumors to render it true. In times of war the desire for peace has given rise to rumors of an armistice or of a final victory. Again, in times of great stress and critical social situations, men's fears are enormously intensified. Under such conditions suspicion breeds rapidly and widely, and men will conjure up alarming tales to confirm their own beliefs. Rumors of "fifth-column" activities, fantastic secret weapons, sabotage, and atrocities were very common during both world wars. These "bogy" rumors invariably affect the morale of the masses.<sup>9</sup> From fear to hate is often only a short step, and so rumors are built around peoples or situations that men hate. The Negro, the Jew, or the enemy with whom we are at war are rich material for rumor-mongering. Odum reports of a rumor that Negroes were called to military service in very small numbers to prevent them from possessing firearms.<sup>10</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was sorely hated as well as deeply revered, was the object of pernicious rumors and whispering campaigns. His alleged Jewish ancestry and rumors that he was going insane were believed by many who had a deep animus for him and all that he represented. From hatred to hostility, finally, is only a short step; many hate-rumors are transformed into ones expressing aggression toward others. The many rumors regarding Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt illustrate this form. Many of these rumors reflected anti-Negro hostility and hatred of the "New Deal." The central theme of these rumors was that Mrs. Roosevelt sponsored the organization of the Negro women of the United States, especially the domestic servants, into "Eleanor Clubs" for the purpose of overthrowing our system of government.<sup>11</sup>

We have said enough about rumor to suggest its importance. Although we have access today to far more factual knowledge concerning on-going events in the world, and therefore have less cause to fill the gaps with satisfying fictions, rumor is still a vital factor in distorting men's relationship with one another. Indeed, modern means of communication and dissemination of knowledge make rumor-mongering at once more easy and dangerous, for they can be used to further unscrupulous ends. With Allport and

<sup>9</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 6-10.

<sup>10</sup> H. W. Odum, *Race and Rumors of Race: Challenge to American Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943), pp. 110-111.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



Postman we are impelled to wonder how much of human history "can be regarded as the reactions of important groups of people to current rumor?"<sup>12</sup> With them we are inclined to agree that probably much of the course of history has thus been determined. Certainly, as they point out: "We still employ rumor to structure our enlarged environment." Furthermore, in spite of modern inventions our emotional and cognitive needs are no different from those of our ancestors. And we are fully as far as they from fashioning a coherent explanation for the unfathomed mysteries of our personal lives. Like them we often rely on legend."<sup>13</sup>

### Social Movements

Social movements are at once a reflection and a condition of social change. They have their origin in social instability and change, social unrest, and dissatisfaction with the *status quo*. When men are dissatisfied with the institutions that frustrate their needs, they become motivated by the desire to change conditions in which they live. A social movement represents a groping attempt to create a new social order, to change the institutions which men consider to be the source of their discontent. In their efforts to change society, however, men undergo changes themselves. Psychologically, the modification of men's attitudes and behavior by the social changes which they themselves have initiated is more important for social psychology than the social changes themselves. Here we come face to face once more with the seeming, but understandable, paradox that man, in changing society, changes himself.

Social movements, conceived as collective efforts to achieve a new mode of life, are widespread in those societies where changes and constant innovations tend to create upsetting crises in the lives of men. In our own society, changes are numerous and rapid, and man cannot always adjust himself to them quickly. Added to these changes, and in part products of them, are the many anxieties and insecurities arising out of unemployment, technological innovations, international tensions, and other disturbances. In the face of these conditions man is quick to give his ear to promises of a better life, no matter how quixotic and utopian. Indeed, it seems that in some instances his zeal to reach out for such dreams of a new order is in proportion to their fancifulness.

Blumer divides social movements into three kinds, namely, general, spe-

<sup>12</sup> Allport and Postman, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.



cific, and expressive: <sup>14</sup> *General social movements* are characterized by the absence of coordination and specific direction and by a considerable amount of unwitting experimentation. Since the general social movement has no clear direction, it is not in need of leadership. It is fundamentally a groping search for the satisfaction of some vague and unarticulated wish or desire. A good example, cited by Blumer, is the "women's movement," which developed without a definite organization, with no clear aims (except "votes for women"), and with no established leadership. *Specific social movements* are forms of mass behavior in which people have a clear objective, organization, and a developing leadership. As an organized movement its members have responsibilities, prescribed tasks, well-defined group morale, and a clear plan of action. Reform movements and revolutions illustrate this kind of social movement. *Expressive social movements* are those forms in which the members are not seeking to establish a new social order, but in which expression for its own sake, or for the purpose of reducing tensions, is the motivating factor. Examples of expressive movements are religious movements illustrated by cults, and fads and fashions.<sup>15</sup> While Blumer's division is sociologically sound, we shall for reasons of simplicity and convenience deal with a few concrete examples of social movements without regard to his classification.

**Father Divine's Movement.** Father Divine's group, located in Harlem, a large Negro district in New York City, is essentially a cult. While it no longer gets the same attention and publicity today, in the 1930's it was a movement of considerable importance. Father Divine, the Negro leader of the group, was conceived as the "Dean of the Universe" and as "God." He attracted a constant stream of devoted followers, almost exclusively Negroes, who became his loyal "angels." While it has, since its inception, worked for the social and economic equality of the Negro, its fundamental psychological appeal is evangelistic. Father Divine, in return for his angels' loyalty, gave them spiritual help and provided them with food and other necessities.

The meetings consisted of testimonials, prayers, and almost endless singing.....

<sup>14</sup> H. Blumer, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-219.

<sup>15</sup> Blumer discusses still another category of social movement which is a mixture of two or more specific movements, illustrated by revival movements and nationalistic movements.

The reader will note that revolution, which Blumer includes in the category of specific social movements, was described in the preceding chapter as a form of collective violence. The rationale of our classification is that aggression and destruction of the existing order have historically been its leading characteristics.



ing and shouting of praises of Father Divine. According to constant streams of testimony from his followers, he cured practically all the ills of flesh and spirit. In their zeal to confess their sins and thank their Father, they became hysterical, moaning, and dazed individuals. The flow of song and testimonial, as Cantril points out, continued for hours on end. They were free to sing, cry, shout, jump, or dance.<sup>16</sup>

The motivations behind the Father Divine movement are, according to Cantril, three in number. The movement grew and flourished because, first, Father Divine promised to his impoverished and demoralized followers a heaven on earth, an escape from the hardships of life. Not all his angels, however, were impoverished. They sought him out for another reason, which was also a reason for the poor: he injected *meaning* into their confused and purposeless lives; he gave them a simple formula for living. Father Divine, finally, raised the status of his followers. In following Father Divine, they were close to "God" and the "wife of God." The servile and outcast Negro could identify himself with this spiritual Father, and experience, if only fleetingly, the equality which he wants but does not have.<sup>17</sup>

**The Townsend Plan.** Like Father Divine's Kingdom, the Townsend Plan was a child of the economic depression of the 1930's. Like the former it offered a scheme of social salvation, but one more rationally conceived. It was spawned in the mind of Dr. F. E. Townsend, victim of unemployment and the anxiety of a man in his sixties who saw no hope for himself and for others in the future. He was enraged by the injustice of the spectacle which he, like millions of others, saw, of starvation amidst plenty.

What Townsend's plan lacked in emotional appeal, it compensated for in economic simplicity. Every American citizen, having reached his sixtieth year, was to receive a monthly pension of \$200 from the government. Every recipient would be required by law to spend his entire pension within a month. The pensions were to be financed by a 2 per cent tax on all business activities.<sup>18</sup> In slightly less than a year several thousand Townsend clubs were formed throughout the country with a membership of over two million people. The movement was organized into a national group which

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<sup>16</sup> H. Cantril, *The Psychology of Social Movements* (New York: Wiley, 1941), chap. v.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 139-143.

<sup>18</sup> F. E. Townsend and R. E. Clements, *The Townsend Plan* (Washington, D.C.: National Headquarters, 1935).



held its own national conventions. It was active in political affairs, spread its ideas through leaflets, and gave its members status with buttons and badges, all of which helped enormously to dramatize its aims. During the first year the organization became so widely known that ninety-five people were employed to handle about 2,000 replies daily to inquiries by mail.<sup>19</sup>

Since people in a social movement are swayed by emotions and driven by frustrations and by hopes for the millenium, they do not question their own beliefs and actions. That the Townsend Plan was basically unsound is attested to by the fact that no economist with reputé in his profession believed it to be practicable. Yet the movement gained such momentum and aroused so much blind enthusiasm that many social scientists were impelled to speak out against it, and to warn the American people of the great danger to our economy if the plan were adopted by the nation.<sup>20</sup> These warnings, as might be expected, were of no avail, for people who are under the dominance of a fixed idea do not listen to argument and are oblivious to facts. As in most social movements, the Townsend Plan and its leader were transformed into Messianic hopes. Dr. Townsend, while perceived by his followers as a common man like themselves, was, nevertheless, endowed by them with extraordinary qualities and, at last, even with divine attributes. Not only was his plan ascribed to divine providence but he himself was "truly inspired by God."<sup>21</sup>

The social-psychological reasons behind the wide acceptance of the Townsend Plan should, in view of our general analysis of the nature of social movements, be fairly clear. Like all utopias and panaceas it was a manifestation of powerful human needs. Its leaders and followers believed that it would satisfy those basic securities and additional comforts which modern man holds in high esteem: economic security, good health, and the "simple" pleasures of life—a motor car, a radio, and the freedom to move about. It fitted readily into the prescribed and comfortable mold of American life. It was not a foreign importation; it advocated no revolt against established authority; it promised only what every American thinks he has an inalienable right to expect. Yet, despite its close adherence to an established set of values, it was, like all genuine social movements, an aberration.

<sup>19</sup> H. Harris, "Dr. Townsend's Marching Soldiers," *Current History*, 43 (1936), 155-162.

<sup>20</sup> See for example H. D. Gideonse, ed., *The Economic Meaning of the Townsend Plan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), Public Policy Pamphlet No. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Cantril, *op. cit.*, p. 186.



tion—a movement away from the existing order toward a fancied better one.<sup>22</sup>

**Other Examples of Social Movements.** Among other well-known social movements is the Oxford group, which has preached a religion of “moral rearmament,” but which has no organization and no membership. Coming in an age of uncertainty and moral confusion, it promised to everyone a way to salvation.<sup>23</sup> The way to this goal was breathtakingly simple: all men are evil but can be transformed by confessing their sins before God. Another movement of great potential import is the more recently organized United World Federalists, an organization whose basic tenet is that armed conflict and eventual world destruction can be forestalled only through a world government.

*Fads and fashions.* Our purpose in this section, however, is to describe in more general terms some well-known *types*, rather than concrete cases, of social movements. One type is represented by fads and fashions. When large numbers of people follow a fad or a fashion, they are seeking in their behavior a release from tension. One would, accordingly, expect an increase in these forms of behavior in times of social unrest. This has, in fact, proved to be the case regarding those fads and fashions which have come to the attention of social psychologists during the past twenty or more years. During the years of economic depression, the fads included marathon dancing, marathon kissing, flagpole sitting, jigsaw puzzles, chain letters, goldfish swallowing, and phonograph-record chewing. These fads swept the country for brief periods and then vanished. Fad behavior is ephemeral and is not repeated in the same form. It must have novelty, for part of its hold upon people, both as performers and spectators, lies in its startling effect. As is obvious, it is behavior without any direction or goal; it serves some compulsive need of the moment.

Fashions differ from fads in that, while present ones may differ from older ones, there is a cyclical continuity between them. They do not occur once only, but recur in modified form at different periods. Again, the term

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<sup>22</sup> This statement holds with special force for reform movements, and also justifies our exclusion of revolution from the category of social movement. A reform movement, no matter how extreme, works within the framework of the existing social order, not against it. A revolution, on the other hand, has as its primary aim the destruction of the established order itself. Both are aberrations, but one is reinforced by established norms, whereas the other is opposed by it.

<sup>23</sup> For a balanced account of this movement the student should consult J. C. Brown, *The Oxford Group Movement* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1933).



*fashion* applies not merely to clothes, but to any recurring activity which satisfies the interests of a large number of people. There are fashions in art, architecture, manners, and even in science and philosophy. Psychologically, fashions are protests against the humdrum and the conventional in life. In new fashions people can be individualistic without paying the price of rejection, for they know that others, too, are following the fashion and will give their approval. The strong appeal of fashions, then, lies in the balanced fusion of the desire to conform and yet be different.<sup>24</sup>

Like fads, however, fashions are basically irrational forms of behavior. This is seen particularly in such forms of fashion behavior as wearing furs in the summer and going without stockings in the winter, or following weight-reducing programs that endanger one's health. The irrational element in fashions is particularly evident in the explanations offered to defend them. In the 1920's long skirts were condemned as unhygienic; in the 1940's they became means of enhancing and "slenderizing" the female figure. In this way the fashions and their rationalizations swing back and forth with no discernible logic. Their illogicality is of no consequence; if they satisfy people's desire for new experience, and gain prestige and superiority for them, that is sufficient reason for their being.

*Nationalistic movements.* These forms of mass behavior are characteristic of certain minority groups and subject peoples. Having little or no status in a dominant group, people who form nationalistic movements tend to romanticize and dramatize their past history, which may have been an admirable one. In this way they assuage their feeling of national inferiority. Thus before World War I, the Czech, Slovak, and Polish peoples throughout the world, and especially within the territories where they resided as subject and subordinate groups, fostered patriotic feelings for their historical past, its heroes, and its achievements. National pride took on something of a "revivalistic" character, and men looked forward to the day when their people once more would form an independent nation. The Croatian and Slovenian people within the Hapsburg Empire were similarly motivated; and the passion for a return to a free and independent Israel has sustained millions of oppressed Jews throughout the world.

The attitudes of people in nationalistic movements have a dual orientation. In order to maintain their self-respect, they look to the past, which they overidealize. At the same time, they are constantly looking toward the future in which the idealized life of the past will once more become a

<sup>24</sup> For a good, comprehensive exposition of fashion, see Young, *op. cit.*, chap. xvii.



reality. They thus fluctuate to and fro between a world that is past but not dead, and one that lies ahead but is yet unborn.

### The Public and Its Opinion

The public as a group nicely represents a fundamental characteristic of the mass, namely, that its members may be widely separated in space while interaction among them still takes place. A merchant in Ohio and a banker in New York may belong to the same public: the voting public, the movie-going public, or the sports public. The public, like other forms of the mass, arises more or less spontaneously; it is not deliberately established, and it has no organization at the beginning. It arises when people are faced by an issue which demands attention and requires a resolution. There are thus as many publics as there are issues around which groups of people become oriented. Being unorganized and hence devoid of rules, the public must solve its problems through collective deliberation and discussion. When it arrives at a decision, we call its solution a public opinion. Structurally, the public is a spontaneous social group; dynamically, it is public opinion, or the social group in action—the group, that is, as it gives voice to consensus arrived at by the resolution of minority group conflicts and differences.

While public opinion is the opinion of a group regarding controversial issues, like all forms of group action it is given expression only in the response systems of individuals. Public opinion is not a belief hovering in disembodied form over a group, but an opinion held in common by many separate and scattered individuals. If we ask a group of college students their opinions of Negroes or of Germans, they will betray the stereotyped images which they have learned from others (see Chapter 13, on the sources of prejudice). Thus, the students will describe the Negro as happy-go-lucky and superstitious, and the German as industrious and scientific. These views are the opinions of the individuals and of the public which transmits them socially to its members.

**Characteristics of the Public.** We have thus far presented only a very general description of the public as a group. We now wish to consider this group in more detail. The public should not be confused or identified with an institution or society. The latter possess a definite organization of customs and rules; they have, that is, a culture. Each is a relatively enduring set of traditions and ways of doing things. The public, on the other hand, is only a semi-permanent, and at times an ephemeral, grouping of people having similar interests and desires. Again,



an institution or a society is a group with fairly settled modes of behavior, whereas a public is ever shifting in the face of challenges and issues. If an issue arises in an institution, there are specific and prescribed ways of resolving it. A public, on the other hand, has no prescribed rules or definitions telling men how they must act upon the issue confronting them. The public is always a rather uncrystallized group which varies in its structure with the issue before it. "The peculiarity of the public," Blumer says, "is that it is marked by disagreement and *discussion* as to what should be done."<sup>25</sup> It is a group which, despite its conflicts and differences, is searching for agreement. Since discussion is uppermost in its interest, action is of secondary import. Action comes into the range of its interest only when it must decide when it must do something and how. Reason and deliberation are its chief techniques. In contrast to the crowd and other forms of mass behavior which are basically irrational, the public, by virtue of taking into account facts and arguments, moves more decidedly on a plane of rationality. Behavior is more individualized in the public; men are more self-conscious and critical than in the crowd; and suggestion and rumor thus have a weaker grip on the formation of public opinion.

The foregoing considerations pose a serious dilemma for the public. How can the public, which is divided by criticism and argument as to what to do about an issue, act collectively?<sup>26</sup> In attempting to answer this question, we must examine the nature of public opinion.

**Public Opinion.** It is not easy to define public opinion in a simple statement. This is the more true when social attitudes are related to or identified with public opinion. The two are not, however, necessarily the same. An attitude is a tendency or disposition to act in certain ways; whereas an opinion often is no more than a verbal formulation of an attitude. (See Chapter 7.)

While public opinion is the opinion of a group, it is not necessarily a unanimous opinion, nor the opinion of a majority. Blumer describes it most adequately as "a composite opinion formed out of several opinions that are held in the public; or better, as the *central tendency* set by the striving among these separate opinions. . . ." <sup>27</sup> This definition highlights the elements of conflict and controversy between the various groups that compose the public and out of which public opinion as a collective product emerges. What ultimately arises as public opinion out of the disputes will

<sup>25</sup> Blumer, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, italics ours.



depend to a large extent on the relative force of the arguments proposed by the various groups that constitute the public. Out of the clash of opinions and arguments comes that intriguing quality of public opinion which Blumer has so well described: "Public opinion is always moving toward a decision even though it is never unanimous."<sup>28</sup>

It was said earlier that attitudes and public opinion are not necessarily identical. Nevertheless, most public opinions are rooted in individual attitudes. Public opinion develops along certain lines because many of the individuals who compose a specific public have attitudes which predispose them favorably toward an emerging collective idea. As we said before, public opinions do not exist in some disembodied public, but are rooted in individual attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions. The public, with its disputes and controversies, aided by modern means of communication and propaganda to bring an issue before a wide and scattered audience, stimulates individual attitudes and arouses their expression. When these expressed attitudes are shared by many people they constitute a public opinion. It is the sharing by people of a common view, arrived at through discussion and debate in which mutual concessions and compromises of opposing attitudes are made, which enables a group to act in concert toward a common end. Thus, while emotions and unreasoned prejudice play a prominent role in public behavior, thereby creating the illusion that a public is a completely irrational group, insofar as discussion and compromise are its distinctive features it is fundamentally rational. Public opinion is a blend of unreasoned passion and thoughtful discussion. If many of the public's decisions are unwise, it is because its emotions vitiate its rational discussions. As Blumer puts it, "public opinion is rational, but need not be intelligent."<sup>29</sup>

If much contemporary public opinion is less intelligent than one might expect it to be, this condition is in large measure due to the fact that effective discussion of issues is barred by powerful interest groups. Their chief aim is to foster partisan views. To this end they will bend every effort to control the agencies of public communication through which effective collective discussion might take place. The most powerful technique which the interest groups employ to mold public opinion in their direction is propaganda. For this reason it is necessary to discuss propaganda at some length.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>30</sup> For a good survey of this problem see H. Cantril, ed., *Gauging Public Opinion* (Princeton University Press, 1944).



## Propaganda

Propaganda is not in itself a form of mass or group behavior, but a contrived and deliberate effort to direct collective action, particularly public opinion, along predetermined lines. One cannot really understand contemporary public opinion in the absence of the role that propaganda plays in its formation. No other technique, not even censorship and the use of force, plays so extraordinary and strategic a part in the arena of public discussion and opinion. It uses every means that intelligence has contrived to manipulate the beliefs and actions of men. In this sense, propaganda is a highly rational instrument: it consists in the rational manipulation of irrational mechanisms (fears, beliefs, prejudices, etc.). Equipped with superlative organs of communication and aided by what may well be history's greatest social unrest, propaganda is today the most powerful technique for the inducement of mass behavior on a stupendous scale.<sup>31</sup>

**Leading Characteristics of Propaganda.** We deal with propaganda in discussions of group behavior because, while the individual is the responsive agent, the group is the object of manipulation. Although propagandists may occasionally address separate individuals, their interest lies in people as members of groups. It is easier to sway an individual's thoughts and emotions when we address him as a member of a group, for his self-consciousness, as we pointed out above, is reduced in this situation. Ethnocentrism is very strong in people, and when we appeal to them as Americans or Germans, as workers or managers, we touch them at one of the most vulnerable spots in their psychological armor. An outsider, because he does not conform with their customs, is readily suspected. Unbelievers and nonconformists have always and in every society been objects of criticism and hostility. The propagandist is keenly aware of man's ethnocentrism, and therefore he appeals to this aspect of man's make-up. The appeal to ethnocentrism and similar irrational dispositions shows

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<sup>31</sup> There is some danger of overestimating the effectiveness of propaganda. We must not lose sight of the fact that propaganda is most effective when people already have a predisposition to accept a proposition, or when their confusion is so great that they eagerly seize hold of any idea that proffers them a sense of direction. The psychology of the individual—his motives, needs, and fears—plays a significant role in his disposition to accept propaganda. Again, as we suggested above, the influence of propaganda depends upon the state of a group or society. Generally speaking, the greater the social unrest and collective fear, the greater is the influence of propaganda likely to be.



that the propagandist aims, not to stimulate discussion as a basis for coming to a collective opinion, but to forestall it. His purpose is to confuse and through confusion to establish control by offering the masses a spurious goal. The goal is spurious because it is not submitted on its merits; instead, it stimulates the motives of egocentrism and intolerance of the alien and the unfamiliar.

Propaganda is an effort to influence people in such a way as to lead them to believe that they have reached their conclusions about an issue themselves. People do not like to believe that their views are initiated by the persuasion of others. Actually, of course, the beliefs which they are led to accept are those of the propagandist. Under the pretense of telling the truth, the propagandist transmits false information.

Again, propaganda consists of propositions unsupported by evidence. In an assertion only the conclusion is presented, while premises are concealed or suppressed. Accordingly, Lumley's definition of propaganda is one of the most accurate and objective. He defines it as "the dissemination of conclusions."<sup>32</sup> The definition suggests the essential character of propaganda, namely, that conclusions are presented for acceptance with no supporting evidence; they are proclaimed, not argued. When their premises are suppressed, conclusions tend to appear invulnerable; we cannot logically refute them since we do not know the arguments or facts on which they are supposed to be based.

Finally, it is necessary to call attention to the fact that propaganda is at times too narrowly conceived. The most common attitude toward propaganda is negative: it holds that all propaganda is dangerous and bad. While this belief is more than a little justified, it is not altogether correct. In its wider meaning, propaganda refers to the dissemination of views in the interest of a good cause, such as educational and political action. Some would include promotional work of any kind, such as advertising and selling, in the category of propaganda. There is danger in this extension of its meaning, however, of rendering the word ineffectual; for a word that means so much means too much. In order to distinguish "good" from "bad" propaganda, the intention of those who try to persuade by means of it is a matter of importance.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the scholar who distorts history by omitting

<sup>32</sup> F. H. Lumley, *The Propaganda Menace* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1933).

<sup>33</sup> The words *good* and *bad* in this context are, of course, evaluative. Every group's propaganda is considered by that group as "good." Also, these terms may refer only to the success or failure of propaganda; so that that propaganda is "good" which succeeds, and that which fails is "bad."



those facts which might cast an unfavorable light on his own nation, is indoctrinating rather than educating. Propaganda is distinguished from education when it deliberately *conceals* an essential element of a conclusion which it is offering for acceptance. The criterion distinguishing the two is not the widely accepted one that propaganda appeals to suggestibility and emotion whereas education appeals to reason and logic.<sup>34</sup> Education may also appeal to suggestion and emotion, but by way of telling the truth in the interest of a growing understanding, rather than by concealing or distorting in the interest of a preferential point of view.

Propaganda is closely related to prejudice and rumor. The propagandist, as we have shown, appeals to our irrational disposition: he plays on our loves, hates, fears, and hopes. One of his major aims is to foster prejudice and arouse hostility. He relies on men's predispositions to disseminate his views. While few, if any, nations can be fully absolved of propagandizing through appeals to human prejudice, the erstwhile Nazi state and the present Soviet regime have carried the appeal to prejudice to the most ruthless and conscienceless extremes.<sup>35</sup>

Many of the incredible rumors which we noted earlier were fabrications of propagandists bent on confusing and demoralizing the American people. Ambiguous stories foster and are fostered by "rumor publics," and "each rumor has its own public."<sup>36</sup> They appeal to highly suggestible people who have axes to grind and who seldom perceive the ambiguous nature of what they believe. The rumor-propaganda is uncritically absorbed by people who find it congenial to their rigid preconceptions.

It has been argued by some that a knowledge of the techniques of propaganda dissemination and the skill of discovering them in newspapers, books, and speeches should go far toward saving oneself from the influence of propaganda. If events of the past ten years throw any light on this problem, then the claim has been exaggerated. Ironically, the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, which set out to train people to detect and avoid propaganda, has itself been one of its casualties. Since an objective analysis of one's country's own propaganda is not permissible in wartime, the In-

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<sup>34</sup> This distinction is made in L. W. Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York: Holt, 1935), pp. 79-80.

<sup>35</sup> For a brief survey of Soviet propaganda in Germany today, see *Confuse and Control: Soviet Technique in Germany* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951), Department of State Publication 4107. For a recent discussion of propaganda in wartime, see D. Lerner, ed., *Propaganda in War and Crisis* (New York: Stewart, 1951).

<sup>36</sup> Allport and Postman, *op. cit.*, p. 180.



stitute found it necessary to discontinue its efforts in behalf of education against it.<sup>37</sup>

## Leadership

Our knowledge of the nature of leadership, despite a considerable list of objective studies on the subject, is largely controversial. It suffers, as is true of most elusive behavior, especially if it is unusual, from plausible mythology and excessive romanticism. Trait psychology has hampered the study of the leader as it has of personality as a whole. The listing of traits which mark the leader has been a disappointingly sterile enterprise.

While we have some interest in this chapter in the problem of what leadership is, our main concern is with the role of leadership in group behavior, particularly in the formation of public opinion and the dissemination of propaganda. We are concerned with the leader who in his own person expresses the hopes and aspirations of the groups which he leads, and whose thoughts and actions he manipulates to achieve certain ends.

**The Nature of Leadership.** The leader is not endowed with magical powers and cannot do as he pleases. While he may be more free in some ways than his followers, he is not wholly independent of them. He is an element of the social field and thus subject to its influence on actions and beliefs. While he may play a significant role in shaping the world in which he lives, he is also markedly shaped by it. An acceptable theory of leadership must take both aspects into account. Leadership is then conceived as the product of the interaction between the total personality of the leader and the dynamic social situation in which he has his being.<sup>38</sup>

The group leader, the mass leader, the molder of public opinion, is thus dependent as much upon the groups which he leads as upon his own special abilities and skills. No man can become a leader of other men unless he expresses and leads to the satisfaction of their interests and needs. Hitler, with all the help of a colossal machinery of propaganda and mass persuasion, could not have swayed the German nation to his cause had he not

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the techniques of propaganda dissemination see *Propaganda Analysis* (New York: Institute of Propaganda Analysis), 1 (1937), No. 2; and 3 (1940), No. 10.

<sup>38</sup> This is an oversimplified statement of the field-theoretical view of leadership. See J. F. Brown, *Psychology and the Social Order* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936), chap. xvii.



voiced the frustration, anger, humiliation, and hope of millions of its population. In the tragic social setting of the German people, Hitler played his role superbly. He succeeded because he embodied their aspirations; they followed him because they sensed in his vibrant, though distorted, personality, the power that would restore for them their national self-respect. That in the end he destroyed them but confirms the theory which we are espousing: having released certain forces in his environment he was finally engulfed by them. As he gained control of the world around him, the world in turn enslaved and destroyed him.

**Types of Leadership.** Further light is thrown on the nature of leadership when we consider the forms in which it manifests itself.

Any classification which one may attempt is tentative and problematic. Nevertheless, it should prove of some value to separate the various forms in some manner.

**Democratic leadership.** The word *democratic* in this context is not used evaluatively. In describing a democratic leader, we are not ascribing to him a specific virtue, but are calling attention to a mode of interaction between himself and the public which is influenced by him. The democratic leader is fundamentally motivated in his leadership by persuasion, conciliation, and a tolerance for human weakness. He is conspicuously less concerned with discipline, and his relations with his followers is friendly rather than distant and authoritarian. He tends to trust people's good sense and to believe that, with adequate guidance, they can attain their own ends. His effect on his followers is seldom dramatic, for they sense in him only a common man like themselves. He need not use propaganda in the opprobrious sense, for, having faith in people's intelligence, he relies mostly on facts and logical argument. In his techniques, however, he may use many of the control symbols of the mass leader, such as suggestion, flattery, and promises of correcting social evils. He may not be above making promises which he cannot fulfill, for, like most group leaders, he has a touch of the Messianic reformer.

**Authoritarian leadership.** While all leadership is characterized by a degree of dominance, this trait is conspicuous in the authoritarian leader. He is dominant, extravertive, and aggressive. He believes in the value of discipline, forcefulness, deference to authority, and the outward symbols of status and power. A contempt for human weakness impels him to distrust the masses. He is thus hardly inclined to persuade his group, but must use various instruments of power, such as punishment and denial, to keep its members in line. Military leaders make up a large proportion of the authoritarian type.



*Charismatic leadership.* In this form of leadership people ascribe a mystical, semi-divine, power to the leader. His hold upon his followers is sometimes described as "hypnotic." While this type has been much written about in the past few years, not much is known about its underlying psychology. The charismatic leader is usually endowed with the capacity of inspiring blind devotion and mass behavior. Jesus, Joan of Arc, and Hitler are examples of this type.<sup>39</sup>

Several good studies have been made in the last dozen years on the nature of leadership, and more recently experiments have been conducted on the problem of developing leaders in and for a democratic society. Bavelas has shown that recreational leaders of the democratic type can be successfully trained.<sup>40</sup> Role-playing in psychodrama, where the trainee shifts from role to role (supervisor to worker and back again), has been used in the training of factory leaders with satisfactory results.<sup>41</sup> These and other experiments show that leadership is not some innate mysterious quality, but a way of behaving that can be learned. A knowledge of how leadership is learned should not only be valued for its utility, but for the insight it would give us into leadership-followership relations, and for the possible light it might throw on techniques for preventing destructive group behavior.

## Conclusion

We have entitled Part Four of this book "Group Dynamics: Social Change and Collective Behavior." This title stresses a basic fact concerning group behavior, namely, that it arises from, and can be understood only on the background of, social change. Historians have been reminding us that the changes in modern society mark a profound transitional period in Western civilization. Sociologists tell us that these changes are largely products of the growth of science and technology. The changes have produced cleavages in our institutional life and conflicts in our thinking. More specifically, the unstable character of

<sup>39</sup> Lest the reader consider it blasphemous to put Jesus and Hitler in the same category, it should be stressed that we are not concerned here with the moral character of the two men, but only with the effect they had on masses of people. Both inspired mystic and religious feelings in their followers, and both were described by their devotees as divinities.

<sup>40</sup> A. Bavelas, "Morale and the Training of Leaders," in G. Watson, ed., *Civilian Morale* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942), chap. viii.

<sup>41</sup> R. Lippitt, "The Psychodrama in Leadership Training," *Sociometry*, 6 (1943), 286-292.



modern life has been effected by industrialization, urbanization, new forms of transportation, and a revolution in the communication of information.<sup>42</sup>

In the face of the revolutionary changes in modern life men do not always succeed in adjusting themselves adequately. Many of their deepest needs are frustrated. They are set adrift by the confusions and contradictions which these changes have brought in their wake. As a result, men seek new orientations, either by trying to escape from a painful chaos, as in crazes and in manias; or by seeking security in a new social order, as in specific social movements and the controversies of publics. When men are confused and afraid, they are more inclined to hate; and the intergroup prejudices, hostilities, and collective violences which mark contemporary life are its most typical expressions.

The profound changes are reflected in still another characteristic of modern life. While these changes have created contradictions and confusion, they have also produced a *mass society*: a society in which impersonality in human relations is intensified; anonymity is increased, with its inevitable individual loneliness; and extreme specialization, especially in occupations, is almost universal. These conditions foster irrational attitudes and beliefs which clash with the rationality of science, technology, and industry. In this state of mind men become easy victims of the crowd mechanisms which flourish at such times and which feed on the hatreds which the times engender. Life is too chaotic to enable man to understand it or to interpret it in a way which will give it meaning. When this inability to give structure to the experiences of life becomes widespread in a population, the force of suggestion, rumor, and propaganda are injected by groups or individuals to fill the void. In this state, men surrender their logic and act upon unrestrained impulse. Credulity sways the minds of men who in less critical situations act on the basis of judgment and evidence. The irrationality of their behavior may reach proportions that would seem utterly incredible. A few years ago a woman in a small community in Illinois caused a mass hysteria by reporting to the local police what is not an implausible occurrence. A man, she claimed, had sprayed a gas through her window which partly "paralyzed" her. The local newspaper reported it in a screaming headline. Within a few hours armed men began to search for the prowler. The story was quickly dramatized by several reports of similar occurrences in other places. Although no evidence could be found of the "Anesthetic Prowler," the whole community became infected by mass hysteria and fear.<sup>43</sup>

The most dramatic instance of mass hysteria in recent times is that effected by a radio dramatization of a story entitled "Invasion from Mars." In this drama armed invaders from the planet Mars were described as descending upon the earth. An estimated million people in all parts of the United States were so

<sup>42</sup> See H. E. Barnes, *Society in Transition* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), pp. 608-609.

<sup>43</sup> See D. M. Johnson, "The 'Phantom Anesthetist' of Mattoon: A Field Study of Mass Hysteria," *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.*, 40 (1945), 175-186.



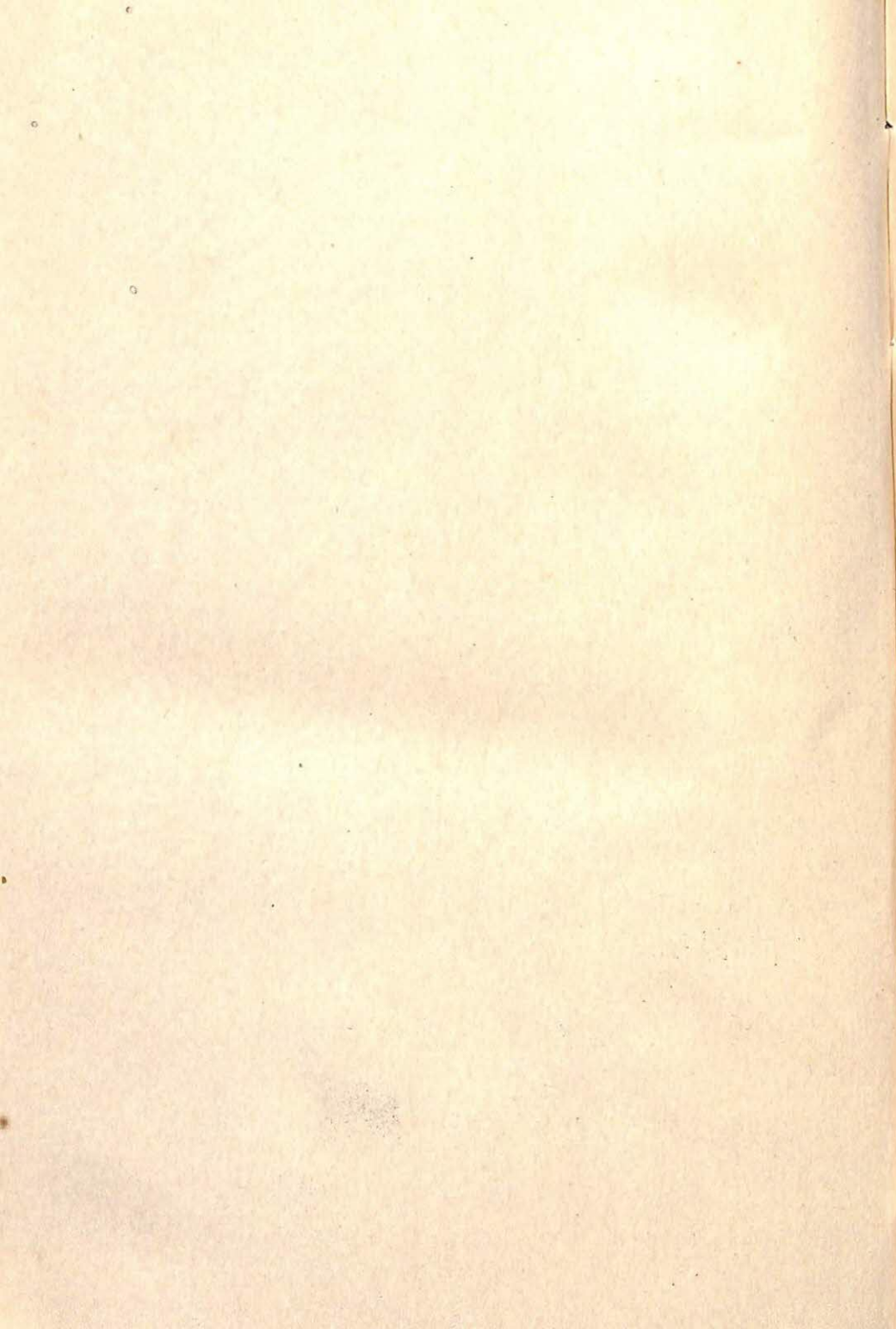
seized by panic that they prayed, ran to rescue their loved ones, telephoned farewells or warnings, and the like.<sup>44</sup>

It seems unlikely that these forms of group behavior could arise in "normal" situations. They thrive in times of crisis and distress, when men want security and a settled way of life. In such times men are moved by fears which cannot be anchored and by emotional distress which beclouds their thinking.

Mental disorders are normal occurrences in our society. With the aid of science men have learned to understand them better and to devise techniques for curing them. In like manner, the forms of group behavior which we have discussed in this and the preceding chapters are normal phenomena. While in some forms in some situations they may be dangerous and harmful, in others they may initiate needed reforms or bring about a new social order. With increasing knowledge of group dynamics, particularly of the basic social and psychological forces that give rise to destructive collective behavior, the latter will come progressively under man's rational control. This is a reasonable possibility, not an idle dream.

<sup>44</sup> H. Cantril, H. Caudet, and H. Herzog, *The Invasion from Mars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940).





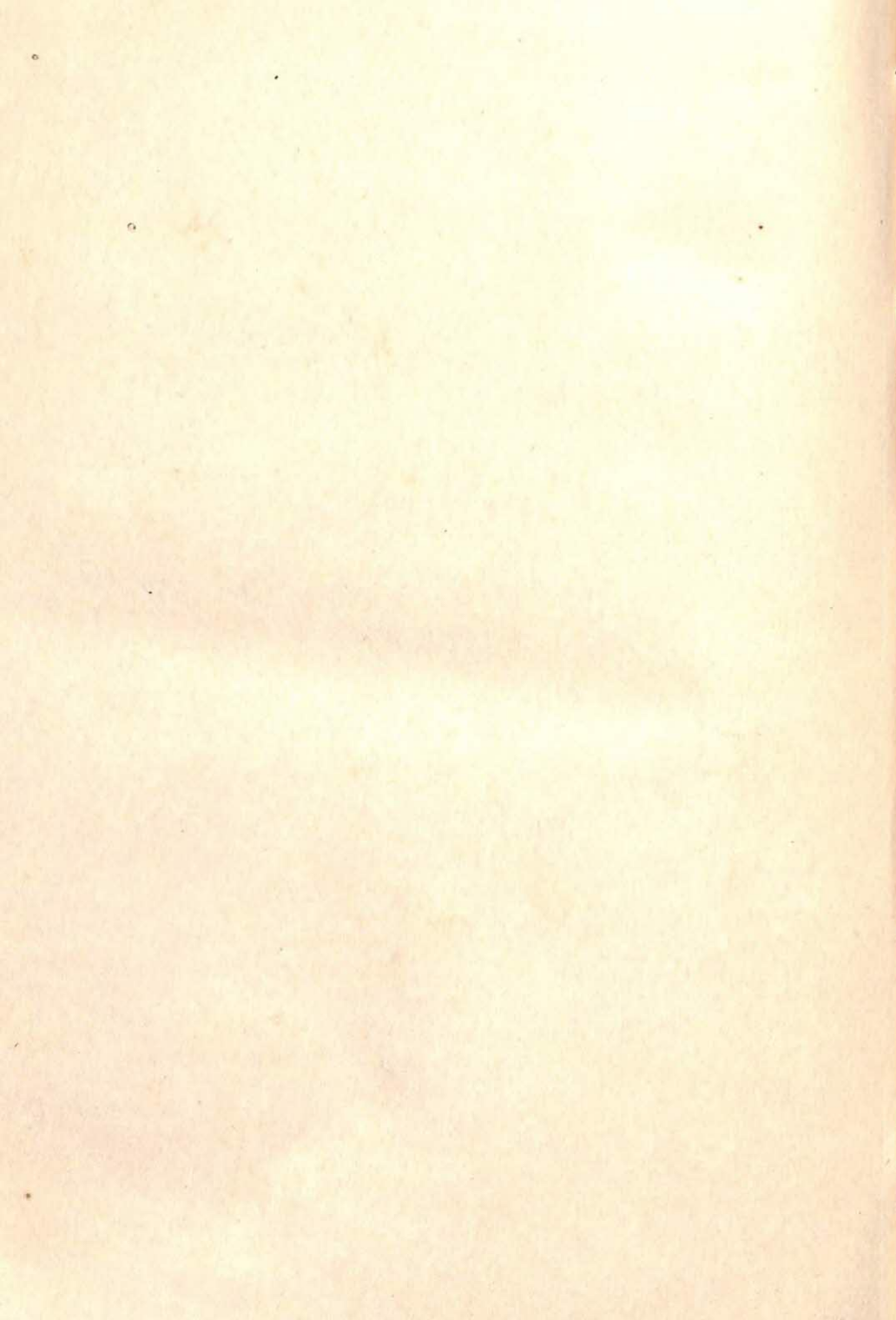


PART FIVE:

# Conclusion

BEHAVIOR, GROUP TENSIONS,  
AND CULTURE







## CHAPTER 15 :

# The Individual in an Unstable World

IN *THE NEUROTIC PERSONALITY OF OUR TIME*, Karen Horney defines the neurotic individual as a product of our competitive and conflict-ridden times. Even though the chief objective of the book is to present an analysis of the neurosis of modern man, it throws valuable light upon the development of the normal personality. This fact illustrates the oft repeated observation that much of our knowledge of personality has been derived from studies of abnormal behavior. Until recently, psychologists have not contributed to this knowledge as much as they might have otherwise because they have concerned themselves chiefly with the generalized human mind. Psychiatry, on the other hand, especially in the works of Janet, Freud, and Adler, was almost from the very beginning concerned with the living person, albeit the abnormal or maladjusted individual. Until recently, social psychologists have not made



many contributions to the knowledge of personality, for they have been concerned too exclusively with special aspects of the total person, such as attitudes and values, or with social processes, such as social interaction or social control.

When, as a consequence of psychiatric and clinical investigations, social psychology turned its attention to the study of the underlying motivations and social conditions of the individual's behavior, it began its career of investigating the person-in-environment. These investigations, almost without exception, show personality to be a product of man's biological heritage modified by sociocultural pressures. This social view of personality agrees rather closely with today's clinical views. Social psychologists and clinicians are agreed that the social environment plays a crucial role in human behavior. Both find, when they look over the existing social order, that the times are out of joint. Society is shot through with contradictions and conflicts, and these conditions seriously affect the growing child and determine the adult's major individual and social adjustments. Furthermore, the modern social psychologist sees that he must be something of a clinician and must rely on the insights and discoveries of the social pathologists in his quest for knowledge of the human personality.

### A "Clinical" Picture of Contemporary Society

In our descriptions of the basic personalities of the Japanese, German, and American peoples, we analyzed the more prominent features of the societies in which each had its origin. We shall now pursue further our analysis of the American people. The United States is fundamentally an urban, industrial civilization. The pressures, tensions, and anxieties of life in this country constitute a heavy psychological burden on the individual. Men have always been confronted with such pressures, to be sure, but they have probably never been so severe or so pervasive as they are today. Men have always suffered fears, for real dangers have always been a part of man's social life. Man has always feared for his self-preservation, for his physical well-being. Man in the modern world, particularly in the United States, need not have so many fears related to physical well-being. For instance, starvation is not an immediate threat to man in the United States. The social machinery exists to forestall this possibility. Thus neither unemployment nor old age holds the same terror for him today that it did a half century ago. The dangers that threaten him today are more deeply psychological: they threaten his individual security and his self-esteem; they are products of cultural conflicts and moral con-



fusions. Man can be deprived of his livelihood, go hungry, and starve. Damaging to his security and survival as these are, they often make less serious inroads upon his ego than do threats to his self. The latter are often more harmful in that they impair the psychological structure of the individual more than physical deprivation might, and are more productive of neurotic illness.

This is the broad sweep of the picture of the world in which man lives today. Let us look at it more minutely.

**Urbanization.** It is a sociological commonplace that Western civilization is largely urban. Most individuals in the United States, even the village and country dwellers, are affected by life in the city.

The mores of city life affect those not physically a part of it through modern means of communication: the films, the radio, television, and the motor car. We are concerned primarily, however, with those people who live and work in our urban centers, or on its fringes. This includes a large segment of the American people—almost 60 per cent. Only one fourth of our population now lives on farms.<sup>1</sup> Even more significant for the understanding of the American way of life and attitudes is the fact that a large part of our population is concentrated in large cities. These cities dominate the socio-cultural life and the behavior of people in the United States.

If our premise that the basic institutions or way of life significantly shape the attitudes and behavior of people is sound, then any change in this way of life or culture demands readjustments of the personality. The immense and rapid shift of people from country to city has had noticeable effects on their mental outlook. From life in a relatively static society where primary social contacts regulated the lives of the people, to life in highly mobile and impersonal relationships has had shocking and dislocating effects on people. As the urban way of life more and more overshadows the life of the village and the country, the people living away from the cities are less satisfied with their lot. Certainly youth is much less satisfied than the older generation with the "simple life." Like their urban counterparts they "demand sheer stockings, Ford cars, and gasoline to run the cars. Such things are not the products of the simple life but of a cash income."<sup>2</sup>

The transition from rural to urban life probably has a less severe effect upon the individual today than a generation ago. The shock-effect of city life upon the rural newcomer, so well described by urban sociologists, is

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Ogburn and M. F. Nimkoff, *Sociology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), pp. 452-453; P. H. Landis, *Social Policies in the Making* (Boston: Heath, 1947), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Landis, *op. cit.*, p. 27.



less intense today than in earlier times. Nevertheless, the impact of urban conditions is bound to have decisive effects upon a personality that has habitually accommodated itself to the more personal, more static, and less competitive life of the farm or country village. Maladjustments and breakdowns are not uncommon consequences.<sup>3</sup> Even more difficult adjustment is in store for those transferring from isolated mountain cultures, or from the far west, to metropolitan centers.<sup>4</sup>

*Social distance.* Social distance is a characteristic feature of contemporary urban life. City life is relatively devoid of warm human associations. As a result, man is becoming increasingly alienated from his fellow men. Amidst unprecedented numbers of people he comes to feel isolated and alone. He has little opportunity to share the attitudes and beliefs of others. Instead, he comes into contact through the radio, newspaper, and other media with a welter of ideas, facts, and events which he seldom adequately assimilates and with people with whom he has little opportunity for self-involvement.

Even his recreation throws into bold relief the detachment of contemporary urban life. Recreation is normally social; it is a form of free activity in which two or more people share a common set of emotions or feelings. Modern man's recreation, however, is surprisingly passive, solitary, and vicarious: he reads the comics, goes to movies, listens to the radio, or watches a baseball game.

The social distance, anonymity, and apparent self-sufficiency of modern man has given him the satisfying illusion that he is highly individualistic. But man today is an individual in the sense that he is more *psychologically alone*. He has a wider ranger of choices, he is more detached from others, more free from emotional bonds with them. But in this very condition of detachment man finds himself in a dilemma: he is freed from the social involvements which have always been man's source of security and sense of belongingness. Instead, man finds himself competitive toward, unfriendly with, or hostile to his fellow men.<sup>5</sup> Urban life, in short, has the character of alienation between men. Interactions are not deeply social but symbiotic; that is, interactions are not primarily between psychological individuals but

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, N. Carpenter, *The Sociology of City Life* (New York: Longmans, 1931), pp. 217-218.

<sup>4</sup> M. G. Caldwell, "The Adjustment of Mountain Families in an Urban Environment," *Social Forces*, 16 (1938), 389-395; P. H. Landis, "Internal Migration by Subsidy," *Social Forces*, 22 (1943), 183-187.

<sup>5</sup> For a persuasive discussion of the aloneness of modern man see Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart, 1941), especially chap. i.



between impersonal objects. People are "numbers," "addresses," "clients," "customers," "patients," "readers," "laborers," or "employees."<sup>6</sup>

*Individualism.* As a consequence of this impersonalization process, individualism, which has been valued above many things in our culture, is in a paradoxical position. The welfare of the individual has always been a central value of life; the individual has always counted. In the impersonal, anonymous, and competitive culture which dominates our lives today, however, the individual has been progressively forgotten. We give lip-service to his importance in history books and political speeches, but in practice his rights must give way to the impersonal forces of competition and economic "progress." Individuality lies in economic prestige, and economic prestige is possible for only a fortunate few. The individual who would be satisfied with only a modest income would probably be described as unambitious or queer, two things which are practically identical in the eyes of most contemporary Americans. He is thus caught in a veritable rat race, a competitive struggle for economic status and social prestige in which both the successful and the failing individuals suffer anxiety and strain. When in addition to the strain of competition he is also alienated from others—and the evidence clearly suggests that the impersonal competitiveness for wealth and economic prestige are in part responsible for the aloneness from which man suffers today—man is indeed in a position which is psychologically very damaging.<sup>7</sup>

*Cultural marginality.* Cultural marginality is an increasing form of social relationship today. In his need to be accepted, achieve success, and escape the oppressing aloneness of modern life, man has been trying to "lose" himself in many activities. He has become something of a compulsive "joiner." The groups to which he belongs seldom have a consistent set of values and their demands upon him are often contradictory. In their efforts to adjust themselves to these differences and contradictions, many individuals become anxiety ridden or maladjusted. The strain of trying to live several roles successfully exacts a heavy toll. This "ambivalence of values" characterizes most of contemporary American life.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See P. A. Sorokin and C. C. Zimmerman, *Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology* (New York: Holt, 1929), pp. 51-52.

<sup>7</sup> For an excellent analysis of the damaging role of competition for prestige and power in interpersonal relations, see K. Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1937), chaps. x, xi.

<sup>8</sup> See G. Murphy, L. B. Murphy, and T. M. Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1937), chap. vii.



The Murphys and Newcomb call attention to the confusion regarding the basic facts and assumptions in our attitudes toward the conflicts and aggressions in modern life. They point out, for instance, that although adults do not openly encourage aggression in the training of children, they nevertheless stimulate it indirectly through the constant emphasis of competition for prestige. At the same time, the adults permit themselves a wide latitude of expression of aggression through their authority over children, through the activities of certain groups such as the police, through the acceptance of the brutality of prize fights, and through the most destructive form of aggression—war.<sup>9</sup> Throughout many of his normal identifications the adult upholds a set of values in one situation which conflicts with a set of values which motivates him in another situation. Many men hold views about labor, war, or peace in their personal-social relationships which they denounce or hide in their relations with their employers, their church, or their government. Ours is a time of conflicting loyalties and contradictory claims.

While such marginal positions affect most people adversely, they are not entirely negative in their results. Some individuals, by virtue of their cultural marginality, are able to transcend the limits of the conflicting demands and view them from the vantage point of a multiple perspective. These individuals are successful cultural hybrids; they have made new adjustments by directing their loyalties toward a constructive synthesis. They have acquired sufficient insight into the conflicting norms to enable them to take the point of view of one toward the other without fully accepting either. Such cultural hybrids are most typically found in the educated immigrant, the emancipated Jew, and the detached intellectual.<sup>10</sup>

We must, however, take the world as it is. In the world as it is the foregoing synthesis is the exception, not the rule. For most individuals, our society is one of considerable social and psychological instability. It is permeated with contradictions and conflicts. The old values and the standards of conduct based upon them are increasingly less valid, but no satisfactory new ones have yet emerged to take their place. Individuals of our society are thus in the ironic position that amidst great resources of stability and happiness, made possible by great wealth, natural resources, technical skill, and psychological insight, they are nevertheless disturbed and unhappy.

**Competitiveness.** We have placed great emphasis on the part

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>10</sup> See the discussion of the cultural hybrid in chap. v.



played by competitiveness in contemporary life. However, competitiveness is only one part of the total clinical picture of contemporary culture which, in combination with others, has a profound effect upon the personality of modern man. More particularly, competition per se seldom produces instability. This is a fact which is too often overlooked. Competition has dire consequences only when the individual's subsistence is endangered or when his self-esteem is threatened.<sup>11</sup> This principle is illustrated in the differential effects of competition in Comanche, Kwakiutl, and American urban culture. Competition was exceedingly pronounced in the Comanche culture. The reader will remember that the Comanche plundered the surrounding people for cattle and other loot to sell to the white man. By competing with his fellows for the loot in the surrounding territory, he could enhance his subsistence and his prestige. As long as his competitive behavior did not endanger the welfare of the group, he could compete with others freely. Since high regard for success brought its own reward of prestige and self-confidence, and since failure was no disgrace, competition had a bracing rather than a neurotic effect upon the individual.

In the Kwakiutl culture, however, the effect of competition could be distinctly damaging to the ego. While the subsistence of the Kwakiutl individual was adequate, his prestige economy was such that his self-esteem could be easily injured. Since prestige was tied up with almost every aspect of his life, and since loss of prestige was demoralizing, his intrasocial tensions were extraordinarily great. As we saw in Chapter 10, loss of status led to suicide; death was an insult to the bereaved, and he could restore his self-esteem only by inflicting death upon another.

In American society the situation is different still. While a world-wide depression and extensive unemployment were a grim reality in the 1930's, they are today, thanks to the social engineering of the "new deal" and the "welfare state," a less serious threat to the masses of people. Thus competition does not seem to endanger the subsistence of the American individual. However, competition for prestige, particularly economic and social status, does endanger his self-esteem. Competitiveness is encouraged in the home, pervades our school life, controls our recreation, and affects our interpersonal relations. This competitiveness becomes even more pronounced in our occupational relationships. While we may rationalize it and varnish it by formal politeness, it is nevertheless productive of tension and hostility between individuals.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 422-423.



A distinctive characteristic of competitiveness in America is its pecuniary quality. One of the surest—some would say *the* surest—ways for achieving distinction is through wealth; and one of the most common ways for displaying one's wealth is through what Veblen called "the pecuniary canon of taste." According to this canon prestige is measured by the amount of money an individual spends. Barnes describes this feature of American life thus: "Nothing is a surer sign of opulence than the ability to waste huge sums of money on nonsocial and nonproductive enterprises, such as ostentatious dress and equipage, elaborate forms of entertainment, lavishly pretentious dwellings, and above all, complete abstinence from labor."<sup>12</sup>

This competitiveness is not only tension-inducing in a large segment of the American population but is a source of much dissatisfaction, repressed hostility, and injured self-esteem for those people who fail to achieve success commensurate with their own desires. The fear of failure is an ever-present quality of the American mentality. From the parents' fear that their child might turn out to be a sissy, to the dread of being caught not knowing the right answers in school, to the compulsion to keep up with, if not to surpass, the Joneses, the individual is hemmed in by neurotic competition and the fear of failure.

Competitiveness, as Horney points out, generates fear: fear of one's competitors, of failure, of loss of status, of insecurity. A peculiar quality of this fear is that it involves the disquieting thought that others will retaliate. This retaliation fear is an expression not only of the dread of losing status but of a repressed hatred of the competitor, a fear that the latter will repay the individual in kind.<sup>13</sup>

The cumulative impact of competitiveness, hostility, fear, and loss of self-esteem upon the individual is to create other tension-producing states, namely, isolation and an exaggerated valuation of love. In view of the isolation of urban detachment and the social-psychological competitiveness of contemporary life, the individual understandingly puts a high valuation upon what he feels to be a profound lack: affection and love. From infancy he has found in love and affection the greatest source of security. It would be most surprising if in his adulthood man should not seek love and affection in the face of isolation, fear, and aloneness. What is psychologically damaging about this need is not that men should need or want it—for love is unquestionably a source of strength and enrichment—but the il-

<sup>12</sup> H. E. Barnes, *Society in Transition* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939), p. 61. See further the discussion of the upper class in chap. xi above.

<sup>13</sup> Horney, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285.



lusion that it will solve all our problems.<sup>14</sup> *Amor omnia vincit!* Romantic love in the United States is particularly victimized by this irrational attitude. Married people too often measure the success of their own marriages by this exaggerated view of love. When the initial ardor of courtship has abated, as it must in the face of growing responsibilities and much "unromantic" living, these people interpret the cooling of romantic ardor as indicative of a blighted marriage.<sup>15</sup>

In this analysis of the role of competition, we have described the normal person, not the neurotic or seriously maladjusted individual. These results are also found in the neurotic individual but in a much more exaggerated form. We have been describing the normal American in our time, and we have found him harassed by apprehension, by more or less controlled hostility and aggression, impaired interpersonal relations, a precarious self-esteem, and an excessive need for love and affection as a means to stability and inner peace.

**Contradictions within the Life-style.** We have already referred to conflicting loyalties and values in contemporary society. The subject deserves special attention, for conflicts of values are invariably reflected in contradictions within an individual's life-style. By an individual's life-style we mean the manner in which he is guiding his action toward a selected goal, how he achieves what to him is a worthy objective. This life-style is significantly conditioned by the dominant values of the culture in which he lives.<sup>16</sup>

The need of success and the demand for humility trouble many individuals in American society. This inner conflict reflects the contradiction between society's stress on acquisitiveness and the Christian ethics of unselfishness. Success is facilitated by a disregard for the aspirations of others, even by a ruthless determination to succeed at whatever cost. Selfishness, however rationalized it may be, conflicts with the norms of our religious institutions, which require an individual to yield to others. The individual has impressed upon him from the cradle to the grave that success is a virtue. But success in a competitive world like ours can often be achieved

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>15</sup> It should be said, however, that the overvaluation of love is not exclusively a product of competitiveness, isolation, and fear but is also culturally induced. Perpetual romantic love in marriage is a cultural expectation; when it fails to meet the test of cultural imperatives, it is pronounced a failure.

<sup>16</sup> For a good analysis of some of these contradictions in our culture, see Horney, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-289. Our own analysis has been considerably enriched by Horney's interpretation.



only by the failure of another. One cannot be sentimental about one's competitor, for is not business business, and is not competition one of life's greatest incentives?

So profound a contradiction cannot be effaced by rationalization. Doubts are bound to intrude themselves into man's consciousness, and apprehensions cannot be completely expunged. In the face of this situation man can choose among several alternatives. He may strive for success at all cost, unconcerned about whose toes he steps on or how many lives he destroys. He may follow the Christian ideal of service and unselfishness at the great risk of economic or professional failure. He may try desperately to harmonize the contradictions and suffer serious psychological conflicts. He may at last be so torn by the tensions of his life that he can only commit suicide or go mad. He will find whichever road he "chooses" difficult to travel.

A variance between culturally induced desires and their fulfillment is a distinctive characteristic of contemporary man.<sup>17</sup> He is almost engulfed by advertisements and other appeals promising a paradise on earth, if only he will avail himself of the opportunity. He is promised everything from the latest model car, to ecstatic love in a bungalow, to "peace of mind."<sup>18</sup> Man is constantly stimulated to want things which he does not necessarily need and to be dissatisfied with what he has. At the same time he is highly limited in satisfying these created wants by individual capacity and by objective barriers. Only a very few can satisfy their desires easily. While one can become a millionaire today, the way to becoming one is increasingly limited. The number of women of the Hollywood type that a man sees on the movie screen, supposing that they correspond actually with their celluloid images, is no doubt very small. Most men have to be satisfied with less allure and resign themselves to accepting the imperfections of reality. In the face of constant stimulation to believe in the improbable, men cannot be easily satisfied with the prosaic. There is a great amount of psychological tension engendered by the discrepancy between stimulated desire and its frustration.

There is, finally, a deep cleavage between the freedom that we like to

<sup>17</sup> Cf., Horney, *ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>18</sup> See J. L. Liebman, *Peace of Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946). It would be wrong to include by association Liebman's book with the appeals for paradise. Nevertheless, insofar as he is of the opinion that the peace of mind which he described is attainable, he is purveying an illusion. It is highly doubtful if such a state of mind can be attained under modern conditions of life, and it sounds like a counsel of escape. Karl Menninger recently expressed the opinion that the desire for peace of mind is a manifestation of the wish to die.



believe we have and the controls that restrain our actions.<sup>19</sup> The loss of freedom in itself does not make serious inroads on personality. The Germans, for example, have taken to authoritarian control without experiencing serious threats to their egos. What is pernicious about the increasing loss of individual freedom in the United States is the fallacious belief that every individual is his own master. The mentality of the frontier and of the intimate primary community is still a dominant trait of the average American. He likes to believe that all men are created equal. In an impersonal industrial society, this attitude is rudely shaken, and the individual has not yet succeeded in adjusting himself to the shocking discovery. On the contrary, he is more likely than not, as Horney has pointed out, to fluctuate between the idea that he is master of his fate and a feeling that he is helpless in a tight little world.

The curtailment of freedom increases with the growth of impersonal relations in the group. In the primary village community, man could regulate his life on the basis of an intimate acquaintance with those with whom he carried on his business. Even the law was not wholly impersonal. A man's character was known, and he could be trusted or not because of his reputation in the community. The principle of equality before the law, however, has become severely perverted in a world in which no one knows anyone outside his intimate little group. Justice and equality before the law are too often bound up with the nefarious condition of individual power and of knowing the right man.

With increasing external threat to the state in the form of war—cold or hot—individual liberty is further curtailed. Controls are necessary in the interests of national defense. In themselves, as we have said, these controls are hardly damaging to the self; in some states, as in Germany for instance, they have been the source of personal security. But the average American thinks of the controls, not as techniques for preserving his freedom from external slavery, but as the rank impositions of politicians and statesmen. He fails to see that the world has radically changed from the primary group of his parents or from his own early social relationships. He is thus overwhelmed with a double threat: because individual achievement is limited by the constricted economic and social frontiers, failure is a constant threat to his ego; because of the totalitarian character of the political scene, he is deeply irritated by an oppressive regimentation. A man growing up under these conditions is bound to differ from one reared under conditions of almost boundless freedom to choose his own style of life.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Horney, *op. cit.*, p. 289.



**Collective Insecurity.** Future research will probably confirm what present observation is already suggesting, viz., that if the society in which we live exists under the constant threat of economic, political, and emotional insecurity, its members are bound to experience personal instability. The present world distress induced by poverty, dislocations in social relationships, war and the threat of war, is bound to make significant changes in man's attitudes and behavior.

While American society has performed a superb job of staying the wolf from the door after the demoralizing days of the economic crash and subsequent depression, the threat of poverty and unemployment has by no means been wholly eradicated. As our investigations of unemployment during the 1930's showed (see Chapter 11), poverty and unemployment have serious psychological effects. In the 1930's the American was faced by unemployment, a humiliating "dole," and economic chaos. His life organization was threatened or even destroyed by those rude events. In countries like Germany, where unemployment and poverty during this period were complicated by a humiliating military defeat and occupation by foreign troops in 1918, the results were even more terrifying. In a world beset by chaos and despair, the old attitudes of the German people were deprived of their original goals so that the impulses behind the attitudes were forced inward, where they took the form of self-punishment. In extreme cases this inwardness degenerated into masochism and psychological self-mutilation.<sup>20</sup>

Psychological self-mutilations, however, cannot last permanently, for they eventually become unbearable. Therefore the Germans eventually projected their self-hate outward upon a scapegoat, the Jew, in the form of unrestrained aggressiveness and brutality. The acts of violence were not natural expressions of the German character. We have pointed out that the set of traits which we find in a person is largely the product of the field of forces or objective conditions which mold the individual. The expressions of violence against others, like the psychological self-mutilations, were consequences of a complex and interconnected chain of events. The tragic history of the Germans teaches us, not that they are inherently brutal, but that their behavior was culturally conditioned. Specifically the fate of Germany discloses three things concerning the influence of field forces, particularly of impoverishment, defeat, and world opinion, upon the attitudes and be-

<sup>20</sup> H. D. Lasswell, *World Politics and Personal Insecurity* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935). See also K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), p. 129.



havior of people: (1) they eventually exhaust the patience and restraint of individuals; (2) they produce irrational mass movements which demand action, regardless of its consequences; and (3) they create violent and unreasoning nationalism among all classes of people which, if unrestrained, leads to war. This mode of analysis places the German's behavior not in his germ plasm nor in an absolute psychological type, but in the matrix of interrelations between the individual and his group. Under similar circumstances and upon the background of similar historic forces, similar behavior might be induced in other people.

Unquestionably one of the most psychologically disorganizing forms of collective insecurity is bred by war, or the chronic threat of war. Most individuals probably are able to return to peacetime normality after a war. Many of them, however, carry the scars of war permanently, and many others are forced to spend months or years in mental hospitals. We do not claim, however, that personality disturbances and mental breakdowns can be directly attributable to war or the danger of war. Statistical data concerning the effect of war on mental health do not strongly suggest that the relationship is very direct. The increase of first admissions to mental hospitals shortly preceding and during the first few months of World War II was comparatively slight.<sup>21</sup> Investigation of the effect of war on people in England, especially during the terrific bombings of its leading cities, shows that war may even organize personality and give it direction through the feeling that the individual has an important stake in its outcome. Improvement in the conditions of some psychoneurotics was occasionally reported.<sup>22</sup>

Facts of this type suggest that war is not a predisposing but an inciting cause. It activates abnormalities in people already somewhat predisposed to mental aberration. The better the morale of a people is in time of war, other things being equal, the more likely they will be able to tolerate the horrors and adversities of war. The closer the individual is to the actual danger of war, such as combat and bombing, the worse will be the effect upon him. Since the predicted coming war would probably result in the destructive bombings of dense population centers, the battlefield would, so to speak, be brought closer to the masses than ever before. What the

<sup>21</sup> See H. W. Dunham, "War and Personality Disorganization," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, 48 (1942), 387-397.

<sup>22</sup> See R. D. Gillespie, *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier* (New York: Norton, 1942), p. 129. For a statement of the positive effect of war on the morale of the citizen, see E. Faris, "The Role of the Citizen," in W. F. Ogburn, ed., *American Society in Wartime* (University of Chicago Press, 1943), 118-142.



effect of experiencing such dangers would have on the population of the United States cannot be adequately gauged, but one might reasonably expect it to be psychologically disorganizing to a sizeable segment.

Not all wars have exactly the same effect upon the individual personality. While it is difficult to measure the comparative effects of the last two world wars on human personality, one is inclined to believe that World War I had a much more disastrous effect upon the soldier's personality than World War II. It is possible that the high mobility of combat in World War II served in part as a tension relaxer. The soldier of World War I, on the other hand, was stuck for long periods in trenches and subterranean combat positions. He was like a trapped animal facing horrible dangers. He did not have the advantage of extensive combat mobility, with its opportunities for flight. Bayonet and close hand-to-hand fighting, which holds considerable dread for the soldier, was also more extensive in the first World War, and this might have added to the horrors of combat.

Judging by the amount of fictional, autobiographic, and other reports on the aftermath of the first World War, one cannot doubt that war's disorganizing and demoralizing effect. It produced untold grief and shattered ideals; it made men cynical and hardened them against human suffering. If men have on the whole stood the effects of World War II better, it may be in part because of war's familiarity. The "painful resurrection" after the first World War was poignant in its suffering and disillusionment.<sup>23</sup> As war and the threat of war become more familiar, the emotions are benumbed. Life becomes more fatalistic. Since death cannot be wholly accepted, men turn toward superstition, spiritualism, or an intensive interest in post-mortem existence.<sup>24</sup> The personality, in short, cannot go untouched by so drastic a restructurization of the social field which war brings in its wake.

Our clinical picture thus shows that there is a close correlation between social and individual disturbances. The more disorganized a culture, the more numerous are the personal distresses—until a time when disorganization and distress themselves have become the cultural norms. Some people are more adversely affected by the socially induced conflicts and contradictions than others. The person who is likely to suffer most severely is very likely, as Horney claims, "one who has experienced the culturally de-

<sup>23</sup> V. Brittain, *Testaments of Youth* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 660-661. See also E. M. Remarque, *The Road Back*, trans. by A. W. Wheen (Boston: Little, Brown, 1931).

<sup>24</sup> See J. F. McCurdy, "Psychological Aspects of the Present Unrest," *Survey*, 43 (1920), 665-668.



terminated difficulties in an accentuated form . . . and who has consequently been unable to solve them, or has solved them only at great cost to his personality. We might call him," she says, "a stepchild of our culture."<sup>25</sup>

### The Impact of Personality on Culture

The greatest stress in this book has been placed on the effect of the group upon the individual. No discussion of human behavior, however, is complete if it overlooks the fact that man is not a passive agent, and that everywhere he resists society's molding influence. Enculturation is not easy; it is always confronted by a recalcitrant biological nature. This recalcitrance exists in infancy and childhood and persists in various degrees throughout a person's life. Protest, rebellion, and aggressiveness against society's impositions are apparently human expressions everywhere. Our study has shown that behavior unintegrated with the culture is probably universal. A range of permissive behavior is accorded to people practically everywhere. Broadly speaking there are three forms which the impress of personality on culture takes, viz., individuality, leadership, and creativeness.

**Individuality.** Individuality is expressed in a large variety of ways, from simple nonconformity to open flouting of society's dictates. The common or universal in a culture does not imply the exclusion of differences. Not infrequently the range of the common admits many differences, as in some European societies, provided the differences do not endanger the life of the group as a whole. Probably no individual is completely absorbed into the fabric of his culture. Always man has a certain degree of autonomy; nowhere does he follow the expectancies of society in his every action.

The impulse to differentiate oneself from one's fellows is strong in all of us, though it is culturally determined in part. This is seen in such a commonplace social phenomenon as status seeking. Man seeks a certain status in society's eyes because society puts a high premium upon it, to be sure; but he seeks it also because of a strong need to separate himself from others. Man needs to be related to others, but he must also on occasion be himself. Paradoxically, while man everywhere strives to lose himself in his group, to be like everyone else, he also seeks to be different. Even when his separateness from others is based on trifles, it confirms his need to differentiate himself from them. He does not take kindly to being taken

<sup>25</sup> Horney, *op. cit.*, p. 290.



for someone else; he is quick to correct his mispronounced name. A woman is indignant when she sees another woman wearing a dress cut from the pattern of her own. Although culture puts the stamp of likeness upon its people, it is their differences that count.

It is on the whole perhaps easier to account for uniformities and values widely shared. Our ethnological and sociological data have certainly made the task easier. The social psychologist, however, is also interested in individual differences, but to discover their sources is fraught with difficulties. He finds that not only does the individual balk at being enculturated but that he tends to differ from others irrespective of cultural conditioning. An individual's past is not the sole or permanent determinant of his present behavior. Motivation may be contemporaneous or functionally autonomous. New motives and different attitudes can always emerge because they are functionally independent of their original source. Attitudes and beliefs, though conditioned by cultural values, do not have the same meanings for different individuals. The perception of objects and the meaning of values vary with the immediate needs and purposes of the perceiving and evaluating individual. Culture is only partly effective, and sometimes not at all, in determining the individual's needs, attitudes, and beliefs. In the last analysis cultural influences are effective in degree, frequency, and permanency only insofar as they are perceived and interpreted by the individual for certain ends. The influence of culture upon the individual is seldom as direct and simple as some ethnological discussions would lead one to believe. Almost nowhere in the process of enculturation can the individual as an autonomous, selective, and defining agent be left out. Cultural determinism as an all-embracing principle is no more valid than instinctivism or hereditarianism. In the present stage of knowledge the most plausible suggestion is that of Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb. They hold that individual differences should be explained on the basis of *the amount or degree of variation* of the influences of heredity and environment between two individuals. From this point of view, while every individual is a product of heredity and cultural conditioning, the difference between any two of them in the same culture is due to the variation of influence of nature and nurture on each.<sup>26</sup>

**Leadership.** Anecdotal views of the nature of leadership are probably as old as reflective man. The ancient observation that in every species individuals will try to attain dominance over others, and that he who is victorious in an encounter becomes the acknowledged

.....  
<sup>26</sup> See Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb, *op. cit.*



leader, has been the fountainhead for most common-sense explanations of leadership. Careful studies of lower animals in general corroborate the view that in every group dominant and submissive behavior takes place, and that before long one individual will take a position of dominance in relation to the others.<sup>27</sup>

Discussions of leadership too often endow the leader with specific and isolable characteristics. Too often these characteristics are thought to be genetically determined, or largely so, and very little subject to change by objective social conditions. The leader is thought to be independent of his culture or the group which he attempts to lead. This view, sometimes called the "great man" theory, would make the leader out as an unusually endowed person who is bound to take his proper place in the drama of history.<sup>28</sup>

Opposing this view is the theory that the leader is "made," not born. More exactly, the leader is a product of the time and place in which he lives. Outside a specific historical epoch which needs his special talents or abilities, the potential leader cannot function, no matter how well endowed he may be with those traits which are alleged to be characteristic of the individual who becomes a leader.<sup>29</sup>

There is a growing tendency today, however, to view leadership neither as an inherent nor an acquired capacity exclusively, but as a process of interaction between an individual and a social milieu. The leader is always a part of the social field in which he leads, dependent on those whom he leads, but a center of high potential in it.<sup>30</sup> The person and the situation, the leader and the led, are not separate elements but together constitute a unitary phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> Leadership is a reciprocal relationship. "Influence

<sup>27</sup> See such good studies as the following: C. Murchison, "The Experimental Measurement of a Social Hierarchy in *Gallus Domesticus*," *J. Gen. Psychol.*, 12 (1935), 3-39; R. M. Yerkes and A. W. Yerkes, "Social Behavior in Infrayman Primates," in C. Murchison, ed., *A Handbook of Social Psychology* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1935); A. H. Maslow, "The Role of Dominance in the Social and Sexual Behavior of Infra-Human Primates," *J. Genet. Psychol.*, 48 (1936), 261-277.

<sup>28</sup> See F. Galton, *Hereditary Genius* (London: Macmillan, 1914), first published in 1869. This is also roughly the view of Terman and his associates. See L. M. Terman, B. S. Burks, and C. C. Miles, *Genetic Studies of Genius*, 4 vols. (Stanford University, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1925). Well known and typical is Carlyle's view: T. Carlyle, *Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (New York: Burt, n.d.).

<sup>29</sup> J. F. Brown, *Psychology and the Social Order* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936), pp. 331-332.

<sup>30</sup> For an interesting presentation of this view, see Brown, *op. cit.*, chap. xvii.

<sup>31</sup> Simmel, the German sociologist, early grasped the configurational nature of leader-



does not take place in one direction, from the leader to the led. The led also influence the leader, so that without the former the latter cannot function."<sup>32</sup> A dynamic theory of leadership is only one aspect of a dynamic theory of behavior. Just as the personality is an interactional process, a process in which culture shapes and is shaped by the individual, so the leader shapes and is shaped by his cultural milieu. The amount of shaping differs in the ordinary individual and the leader. As a center of high potential *at a particular time in a particular situation*, the leader is able to control or manipulate the social field (society, group, culture) more extensively than the "ordinary" individual.

**Creativeness.** The greatest degree of personal autonomy and independence from the controlling force of culture is found in creativeness. In creativeness the individual is peculiarly himself. Whether through spontaneity, direct expression, or sublimation, the creative man is able to transcend the narrow and constricting cultural pressures to realize his expanding self. The creative person, more than the leader, is able to free himself from field influences because the objects which he controls or manipulates usually lie in the realm of ideas rather than in the domain of men and events.

Until recently most of what has been written about creativity has come from poets and philosophers. As a consequence of their deliverances, the view has become popular that creativeness is a mystical power found only in persons with "demonic" natures. The demonic power of the creative individual is irrational and unexplainable. This view has been especially predominant in German romantic literary criticism and has been a fundamental idea in the writings of Wilhelm Dilthey.<sup>33</sup> Actually, creativeness is a normal phenomenon which can be and has been studied empirically. It is probably present in all people in some degree, but, owing to the repression and control created by the process of enculturation, it tends to be largely inhibited.

While the question of the sources of creativeness has been heatedly debated, one must assert that it is a product of the combined influence of heredity and environment. In those cases at least where creativeness is objectified in great artistic, philosophical, or scientific achievements, we are hardly justified in denying heredity as a basic determining factor. We

.....  
ship in quoting a German leader: "I am your leader, therefore I must follow you." See G. Simmel, "Superiority and Subordination as Subject Matter of Sociology," trans. by A. W. Small, *Am. J. Sociol.*, 2 (1896), p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> H. Bonner, "Field Theory and Sociology," *Sociol. Soc. Res.*, 33 (1949), 171-179.

<sup>33</sup> W. Dilthey, *Das Erleben und die Dichtung* (Leipzig: Teubner Verlag, 1906).



must suppose that the intellectual power which makes possible a great artistic or scientific achievement is basically determined by the genes of the parents of the creative genius. Logical and biographical considerations alone would compel us to this conclusion. Great intellectual power and unusual creative ability apparently spring from families in which some other members are exceptionally endowed. Studies of multi-gene determination also lend support to this conclusion. Tryon's experiments on rats give us important clues to the understanding of the hereditary determination of human intelligence and temperament. Washburn's study of the temperament of infants and Hall's investigation of the emotions lend credence to the hypothesis of the multi-gene origin of intellectual and creative abilities.<sup>34</sup>

The basic hereditary endowment, of course, if left dormant, is inhibited, or is greatly enhanced by the child's personal-social relations with members of his family. Parents can stifle, tenderly cultivate and encourage, or stupidly neglect the child's potential gifts. Exceptional abilities, perhaps even more profoundly than ordinary endowments, need a rich and fertile soil in which to take root and grow into full stature. Inherited gifts combine with environmental determination to produce the truly creative individual.

It is a mistake to conceive of creativeness solely as a special and unusual capacity, to associate it exclusively with the productions of men of exceptional talent or dismaying genius. In the larger sense it does not surpass all understanding, and it is not the exclusive property of exceptionally rare individuals. Creativeness, Murphy points out, "is not private property; it belongs to humanity, and wherever there is human material it can be nursed, cultivated, and brought to flower."<sup>35</sup> A person can feel or think creatively without ever producing a tangible manifestation of his freedom and spontaneity. He can *live* creatively when he actualizes his own potentialities, when he re-creates his immediate environment by his own intellectual and emotional powers, and when he strives to make his own personality into a work of art. Man is noncreative when he becomes alienated from others and himself, represses or inhibits his own spontaneity and freedom, and acts on the basis of neurotic self-deception. Neurotic be-

<sup>34</sup> See R. C. Tryon, "Individual Differences," in F. A. Moss, ed., *Comparative Psychology*, rev. ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), chap. xii; R. W. Washburn, "A Study of the Smiling and Laughing of Infants in the First Year of Life," *Genet. Psychol. Monogr.*, 6 (1929), 397-537; C. S. Hall, "The Inheritance of Emotionality," *Sigma Xi Quart.*, 26 (1938), 17-27.

<sup>35</sup> G. Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure* (New York: Harper, 1947), p. 475.



havior is fundamentally nonproductive behavior, behavior dictated by crippling fears and stultifying defenses. It cannot transcend its personal inhibitions or surmount the inescapable barriers of daily living. Creativeness means freedom, and freedom consists of the spontaneous activity of the total self.

## Conclusion

Few comments upon the grandeur that is man are more banal than the statement that man has mastered the material forces of the world but has failed to understand or control himself. It is not our intention either to support or refute this semi-romantic observation. We fondly hope, what we dare not affirm, that we have demonstrated in the pages of this book that, while man is not wholly either the master of his fate or the captain of his soul, he can patiently learn to understand himself. The road to this increased self-understanding is not built by a single individual or by a single scientific discipline, but by the open-minded collaboration of several disciplines. The nature of human nature cannot be discovered in biology, or psychology, or sociology and cultural anthropology, but only in a unified frame of reference which builds upon the facts and insights of them all. Social psychology becomes a science in proportion to its coherent use of the data of several disciplines. A unified interdisciplinary approach, such as that which we have developed in this book, is the most logical path to a science of social psychology. The organized interdisciplinary data point to the central place of individual and group behavior in social psychology, and show that personality can be understood only when it is squarely placed in a sociocultural context. If we are to attain a deeper dynamics of human behavior than we now possess, social psychology cannot found itself upon a single discipline. The full stature of psychological man may never be completely measured or known, but every student of human behavior has the moral obligation to seek to discover it. It is the duty of the behavior scientist to follow every promising lead, but skeptically. He who reaches the place in the quest where he is certain of having discovered the final and irrevocable answer has surrendered his scientific heritage to arrogance and illusion. In science that is the unpardonable sin.



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